

A N *11-9-c*
ILLUSTRATION *H*

OF THE
WISDOM and EQUITY

Of an INDULGENT

PROVIDENCE,

IN A

Similar Treatment of all Creatures on this Globe.

WHEREIN

The Nature and Ground of **HAPPINESS**; and also
the Origin of **EVIL**, are carefully examined and
represented.

*"Amongst all the wide Distinctions which the CREATOR was
obliged to make in the Dignity and Perfections of his Crea-
tures, he has made much less in their Happiness than is
usually imagined, or indeed can be believed from outward
Appearance."*

A Free Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil, p. 31.

L O N D O N :

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M.DCC.LXI. *8*

ILLUSTRATION

OF THE

WISDOM AND FORTITUDE

OF AN IMPERIAL

OF AN IMPERIAL

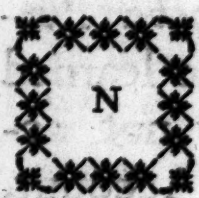


30h



A

P R E F A C E.

 O one Thing hath more perplexed considerate Men, in forming their Sentiments of the SUPREME BEING, or been thought more difficult to resolve, than the *seeming* very unequal Distributions of *Good* among the Creatures here in this World; and especially,

A 2 among

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among the Individuals of our *own* Species. Many in all Ages 'have sadly stumbled at it. And it has had on the Minds and Manners of *vast numbers* extremely unhappy Effects. A *whole Sect* of Philosophers seem to have been hereby led to ascribe all Things to *Chance*;—even the Formation of the Earth; and of every Thing contained in it; as well as the various Cases, and vastly different Circumstances, in particular of *Mankind*. And several *other* Persons of great Note in the learned Heathen World, would not acknowledge, on the same Account, a divine Direction of *any* earthly Matters. Yea, it is said to have made one of them (*Diagoras*) a perfect *Atheist*. Nor is there any room to wonder, if those who did not believe that the Gods they owned

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owned did concern themselves at all about the Conduct of Men, or any Matters relating to them, had no Apprehensions of a State of Retribution; and thereupon indulged themselves in all the Gratifications and Excesses, to which their respective Dispositions led them.

Indeed there was great Hesitation concerning a *future* Existence, among most of those heathen Sages who *acknowledged* a divine Providence. And probably, it was occasioned partly, if not chiefly, by the Observations they had made on the Prosperity of many of the most flagitious Characters; and on the contrary Circumstances of others of the most eminent. Yea, the holy *Psalmist* was much perplexed (as he tells us, *Psal.* lxxiii. 13, 14.) on this

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same Account: Since *He had been plagued all the Day long, and been chastened every Morning*: from whence he was tempted to conclude, *He had cleansed his Heart in vain, and washed his Hands in Innocency*: When the *Eyes of the Wicked stood out with Fatness*; and *They had more than Heart could wish*, ver. 7.

Now, since the Case of Mankind appears to be the same, and is *ever* like to appear, as it did in former Ages: and as those who want a Refuge from the Rebukes of their own Minds, are fond of laying hold on the same delusive Imagination concerning a future State, that formerly prevailed in the *heathen* World; and also labour to improve it to the same pernicious Purposes; it is exceeding

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ceeding desirable ; partly for the Sake of those sensual deluded Sinners, who *abound* among us ; and partly to compose the Minds of such pious and virtuous People, as may be dejected or discouraged by means of those Appearances, to set this important Matter, so far as it may be effected, in its true Light : and the rather, as it appears necessary to the settling in our Minds just Notions of God and his Providence ; and thereby feeling the Ground and Obligations of Religion and Virtue. I am not so vain as to pretend, in the least, to a deeper Penetration into this abstruse Subject, than the rest of Mankind, by reason of greater Abilities : but, having carefully examined it, in all the material Instances that occurred to my Thoughts ; and there-

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thereupon obtained a firm Persuasion, that the Distributions of Providence, even with respect to *irrational* Creatures, and more especially to *Mankind*, are not only more equal than hath been generally apprehended, but so indulgently directed in promoting the Happiness of all, as that, on the *whole* of their Existence, such *similar* Kindness is shewn them as is perfectly unexceptionable ; I was willing to lay before the Public the Fruit of my Inquiry* ; that my Sentiments might be

* This I proposed, when I first made the Attempt, (which was several Years past) but as my Conceptions had led me far from the common Road, I had not Courage to commit my Sentiments to the Press, 'till a late masterly Performance has emboldened me : (viz. *A free Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil.*) and because the general Plan which this eminent Writer hath proceeded on, seems nearly to correspond with that I have chosen ; and as many Observations in this Discourse, are finely illustrated,

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be examined, if thought deserving Notice, and either be improved by some abler Hand, or else candidly refuted, if found erroneous, or to have a misleading Tendency.

I am not myself apprehensive, that in *any* Part of this Attempt, I have given just Offence to judicious inquisitive Persons, who will impartially and candidly examine what I lay before them: nor would I willingly provoke the Displeasure of any other. My sincere Desire is, to promote the Honour of the ALL PERFECT BEING, by endeavouring to illustrate

illustrated, and solidly I think proved, in this acute Treatise, I have thought proper to refer to it in several Instances; but have not found it needful to alter, in the least, my Copy; altho' it might have been of considerable Advantage to me, had it appeared before I ventured on this Investigation.

a

his

x A P R E F A C E.

his *amazing* kind and *impartial* Treatment of his earthly Creatures, notwithstanding the various Orders, and vastly different Circumstances, in which he hath thought fit to place them; and thereby to excite ADORATION and PRAISE * in the Minds of those who may contemplate these Matters, as well as to prevent such perplexing Thoughts concerning them, as have given no small Concern to a great many considerate Persons.

* To fix firmly in our Minds a full Persuasion of God's impartial and unexceptionable Treatment of his Creatures; and of his overflowing Bounty, and amazing Goodness to all, is a very conducive Method to exalt highly our Conceptions of him; and hereby to work such a *ready* Submission to his Will, in all afflictive Circumstances; and so sincere and steady Obedience to the Rule of Life he hath given us, as may suitably influence our whole Conduct. The Subject therefore I propose to handle is of vast Importance to all the Purposes of *Religion*; as well as in the Instances I have here mentioned.

And,

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And, as I readily profess the highest Veneration for the *Holy Scriptures*, and am very far from intending, to disparage, in the least, either the Precepts, or Doctrines, which this *Heavenly Rule* contains; I hope the Reader will candidly interpret such Expressions and Observations, if any such there be, as may appear to have, by plain Construction, so unhappy a Tendency any way. I have, indeed, allowed my Mind its *full Liberty* in examining this weighty Subject; but have taken some due Care to prevent any wild Excursions: and, if I may, notwithstanding, have unawares been led into wrong Sentiments, in any material Point, I shall rejoice, and be sincerely thankful, should any Person be so indulgent, as to inform me, in a

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Christian Manner, of any such Mistake.

I have neither Leisure, nor Inclination, to engage in Controversy; nor am I fond of opposing any one. My ardent Desire is, to investigate Truth, on the Accounts above pointed at; and to improve what Discoveries of it I am capable of making, in particular to *social* Utility.

In reasoning on this Subject, I have not sought the Supports of Authority; nor thought it needful to grace the Margin with pompous Quotations. Authority indeed appears, in the Light I consider it, to have very little Weight in a Matter of pure Reasoning.—I presume to add:—

Great

A P R E F A C E. xiii

Great Names have rather seemed to me, of late Years, more an Hinderance than an Help, in searching out Truths that have not had the Suffrage of acknowledged Authority, and especially such Truths as oppose the common Sentiment. It seems therefore to me a pitious manner of canvassing a disputed Subject, to quote *Authorities* in Proof of what is reasoned; since mere *un-inspired* Authority can neither illustrate, nor establish, any one controverted Point. And how miserably hath the World, in every Age, been imposed on, by a credulous Reliance on the unproved Sentiments of venerable and admired Names.

'Tis the Part of the Generous,
bravely to break through this

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strong Bound, and to strive to set *momentous* Matters on their proper Basis; that Virtue and Piety may be *rationally* put in Practice; and each of them obtain their proper prevailing Influence. But how can this be expected, while Men are affrightened from a free Inquiry into them? Let *well-meaning* Persons then be not only allowed their proper Liberty, but obtain also some due Encouragement: for the Attempts of such, however feeble, may incite the Endeavours of more able Hands; and *thus* at least turn to considerable Advantage.

With this View I have ventured to appear in the Subject of this Discourse.

The

A P R E F A C E. xv

The Method I have chosen in handling it, is as follows.

FIRST, “ I enquire into the
“ Nature and Ground of *Hap-*
“ *piness*; and state the Notion
“ I entertain of it, in several
“ Views; which represent, as I
“ conceive, its principal Dis-
“ tinctions.”

This I thought adviseable, as a general Ground-Work to erect my chief Disquisition upon. And, on the same Account, I proceed,

SECONDLY, “ To examine also
“ carefully, the Nature of *Evil*;
“ the Endurance of which, is
“ supposed to constitute the con-
“ trary Case of *Misery*, in the
“ Degree in which ’tis suffered.”

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And because the *Origin* of Evil hath been always apprehended a very great Difficulty; and hath perplexed the Minds of Abundance; I strive to account for it in the most rational Manner I can suggest: wherein I flatter myself, I may, in some Measure, have succeeded.

THIRDLY, “ I consider the
“ *Distributions of Providence,*
“ with respect to Good and Evil,
“ among the Creatures in ge-
“ *neral.*”

This further Step I take, partly to point out the *amazing* Skill and Kindness of Divine Procedure, in its *vastly* various Appointments, to the numerous Orders of Creatures stationed here in this World: and partly, to make way for

A P R E F A C E. xvii

for the plainer Illustration and Evidence of the *main* Point; viz. God's *similar* unexceptionable Treatment in particular of *Mankind*.

And, to open this Path yet wider, I go on to add,

FOURTHLY, “ Some other general Considerations, which
“ more directly and particularly
“ respect the different Circumstances of *Men*; and which
“ tend to obviate a great many
“ Difficulties that arise on the
“ Subject.”

Then I proceed to the *main Point*: viz. To examine the Case of Mankind in those several most remarkable Views.

FIRST,

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FIRST, " In what concerns
" their different *Situations*, in
" those various and vastly dif-
" ferent Regions, where *Provi-*
" *dence* may have placed them.

SECONDLY, " Their *widely* dif-
" ferent *Stations*, which seem
" assigned to Individuals, in most
" of the inhabited Parts of it.

THIRDLY, " The *vastly* dif-
" ferent *Circumstances* of each
" Rank in those following noted
" Instances : viz. — their intel-
" lectual Endowments : — their
" corporeal State : — and their Case
" as to *Externals*; or the *outward*
" Goods of Life."

I take these to be the only con-
siderable Things that need to be
ex-

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examined. And I endeavour to prove ; that in each of these Views, they are all treated, on the whole, even of *this* Life, in the Prospect of a *future*, (which ought, so far as this, to be taken into the Question,) with *astounding similar Kindness*, so far as they shew themselves equal Objects of it ; and as far as this present System will admit ; which is all that can, with any *Reason*, be expected, or desired.

After I have concluded the Argument, as thus proposed to be handled, I endeavour to improve it farther by some *practical* Inferences. For mere Speculation concerning any Point, can be of little Service, if it no way produces any good Effects on Mens Hearts and Lives ;—if it no way

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way tends to Virtue and Happiness. And those Inferences may, I apprehend, be of some Service to the *virtuously* inclined, as well as to those of the *opposite* Character, altho' they are especially designed for the *Latter*.

If I am thought to treat *these* with some little Acrimony, I desire it may be considered; that their stupid lethargic State doth need some cauterizing, in order to rouse their Spirits to a more suitable Exercise of the Powers they are endowed with: and in order also to abate that vain Opinion of themselves, which this *worthless* Generation are very apt to entertain. Besides, I am under some Apprehension, lest *those* should endeavour to pervert the Intention of this Discourse, if it come into the Hands of any of them;

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them; and should strive to make it an Handle for their sottish *Opinions*; if not for their *vile Indulgences*. For these strangely beguiled People, are forward to catch at every Thing to keep themselves in Countenance; and many Times *drudge hard* to stupify their Minds, while wallowing in those *Excesses* of animal Gratification, wherein the *brute* Creation can scarcely be *compelled* to join with them.

If what I have attempted appear to any, on this general Account of it, to be either enthusiastic, or too presumptuous; I entreat those in particular, to suspend for a while a positive Determination, if disposed to examine what I offer on the Subject, until they have impartially and candidly considered it. And
if,

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if, on so doing, they see no Reason to enter into my way of thinking; I would beg of them to allow me the like Liberty of Opinion, that I am willing to encourage in all of *virtuous* Dispositions. *

* The Stiffness of Pointing in this Discourse; and the Frequency of Italics, tho' needless, and I doubt *disagreeable*, to judicious and attentive Readers, is aimed to be of Service to those who may cursorily, and with less Discernment, run over the Observations herein made, which may not, in some Instances, be as plainly expressed as might be adviseable for such. And, on the same Account, I have been carried into Prolixity, in particular in the more abstruse Parts of the Argument I have undertaken, in *both* Respects I hope to be excused by candid Readers.

T H E

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AN



A N
A T T E M P T

To Illustrate the *Amazing*
Dispensations of Providence, &c.

C H A P. I.

“ Wherein the Nature and Ground
“ of *Happiness* are considered ;
“ and its principal Distinctions
“ explained.”

✱✱✱ S I attempt in this Discourse, to set
✱ A ✱ the various Allotments of Divine
✱ ✱ Providence, with respect to the Crea-
✱ ✱ tures in *this* World, in an unexcep-
tionable View ; and more especially with re-
gard to *Mankind* ; I apprehend it adviseable,
to settle first of all, the Notion on which I
shall proceed, concerning the *Happiness* that
B every

every Species of Creatures was undoubtedly formed to enjoy; and of which they are rendered capable. For a right Conception of this, will lead us the more easily to account for those various Portions of apprehended Good and Evil, which may seem to have been distributed with a strangely unequal Hand, among the Individuals of every Species; and, (which is very surprizing) in particular among our own *Human* Order; where, for several obvious Reasons, it might be least expected.

The Word *Happiness*, is so variously applied, and so differently understood, that 'tis not easy to fix the Sense of it so determinately and plainly as may give Satisfaction to every one. *Positive* Happiness, which is the only Happiness that deserves the Name, consists in general, as I conceive, *in the Fruition of Good*; and more strictly in the *Pleasure*, or Gratification, which such Fruition affords. Indeed, this *Pleasure*, or Delight, is what we commonly understand by the actual *Fruition* of it. Wherefore, to be *happy*, imports in general, that the Persons, or Creatures, of whom 'tis spoken, have some Way obtained a comfortable Enjoyment of their Existence. For, I can form no other Notion of the Happiness of *any* Being, from whatever Objects derived, and in whatever Manner enjoyed, than, of his being *pleased*, or delightfully entertained, in his State and Circumstances. Even God him-
self

self can be but *perfectly pleased*, in whatever Entertainments his proper Happiness may consist.

Now, the Pleasure a Creature takes in the Enjoyment of any Good, immediately and chiefly ariseth from the *Taste* he hath for it. And this *Taste* is produced by some natural Appetite, or natural Tendency towards such Good: Or otherwise results, if a rational Creature, from an Apprehension, or Imagination, of its being *desireable*; which often exciteth an Appetite for it, or a Desire to obtain it.

When the Object and the Appetite correspond with each other, this *pleasing* Relish is obtained in the Enjoyment of it. For 'tis, as I conceive, a *right Connexion of Things*, that is the immediate principal Ground of every entertaining Good; or, of the Pleasure that is enjoyed by *any* Creature in *any* Good provided for him. The nearer therefore and better, that an agreeable Object, and the Faculty affected with it, do suit with each other, the truer, and more delighting, is the *Relish* such Good affords.

But, to have a clearer and more distinct Apprehension of what is here intended, it may be proper to observe farther; That Good is also a Word of a very extensive Significa-

tion ; and is often differently applied. The Subject I am discoursing on, leads me to take Notice, only of *intellectual*, and *sensible* Good; and of *real*, and *imaginary*. Good, in one or the other of these Views, is, as I apprehend, the only Ground of every Kind of Happiness, and also of every Degree of it. The Entertainment, or Delight, which one or the other affords to proper Percipients, is (as hath been noted) the *actual Happiness* derived those several Ways ; which takes accordingly its Character from the respective Goods that are the Ground of it : and hereupon is termed ; either *rational*, or *sensible* Happiness ; and *real*, or *imaginary*. It may be of Service, for the better clearing of what will be advanced on this Subject, to take some Notice of each of those Distinctions.

With regard to the *first* mentioned, viz. *Rational* Happiness ; *this* is peculiar to Creatures endowed with *Understanding* ; since the proper Entertainments and principal Delights of those, are such as center in the *Mind* ; and result from a right Exercise of its Capacities and Powers upon suitable Objects.

Indeed, the *Minds* of Men, who are, whilst in *this Life*, but *imperfect* Rationals, derive Part of their Entertainment from *sensible* Gratifications, because they afford a proper Delight to the inferior Part of our Nature, in
whose

whose Ease and Well-being we are very nearly interested ; and because we receive a part of our Perceptions through the Instrumentality of our *Bodies*, to which in the present State we are confined. But the *special* Pleasures of our *Minds*, arise from the laudable Exercise of their own immediate Powers ; and more directly, “ from the *approving Consciousness* of “ *our Praise-worthy Conduct.*” In the Manner therefore we find Reason to approve of our Course of Life, or our particular Actions, *when carefully examined* ; in that Degree we are *rationally* delighted ; and thereupon enjoy the principal Part of our proper Felicity. And the more commendably we exert our Talents, and the greater Account they turn to, particularly in the Way of *Social* Utility, the more of such Happiness we obtain.

This Sort of Felicity then, viz. proper *intellectual* Pleasure or Entertainment, is the Privilege only of Creatures who are endowed with *Reason*. But, since every thing that gives Pleasure (I mean such Pleasure as corresponds with the Nature of the Percipient) is, in the manner it does so, a proportionate Ground of Happiness : and, since every created Being must be supposed to be designed for some State of Happiness *, or, to have an

* See Orig. of Evil. p. 30, 31, &c.

Existence given it, preferable, upon the whole to Non-Existence ; otherwise, (as will be proved hereafter) there would be room to impute, not only Unkindness, but a Degree of *Cruelty*, to Him who formed it ; therefore, we may farther conclude ;

SECONDLY, “ That *Sensible* Gratification
 “ also doth in like manner, constitute, *another*
 “ Sort of Happiness ; viz. such as is
 “ suited to the Natures and Capacities of the
 “ Creatures rendered capable of it.”

This indeed, is the only Happiness that Creatures void of Reason, can be supposed to enjoy. And since *these* appear to have a pleasurable Fruition of their State of Being, in like manner as may be said of Men ; or supposed of Creatures of higher Orders ; therefore may *these* also be as properly said to be happy *in their Kinds*, when their Capacities are gratified with suitable Good, as even the highest Ranks of Rationals may *. For, wherein can the Happiness of *any* Sort of Creatures be supposed to consist, but in the Fruition of *such* Good as corresponds with their Natures, and with their several Capacities of tasting Pleasure ?

* Orig. &c. p. 35.

Let this be accounted a lower Kind of Happiness, as very likely it will ; yet, it certainly deserves to be termed *Happiness* ; since it gratifies the Creatures this Way delighted, in like Manner, and to the like indulgent Purposes, as *rational* Pleasures delight the Creatures endowed with Reason : that is, it gives them the like comfortable Enjoyment of their Being. And should any of them be as much pleased in their Way, in proportion to their Capacities, it may perhaps be no Absurdity to say, they are, while this is the case, *alike happy*. But more of this in another Place.

As for *Man*, He being, in his present State, a compound Creature ; that is, being formed with an *animal*, as well as *rational* Nature ; and hereupon endowed with different Powers, or different Capacities, of tasting Good ; is manifestly designed, during *this* State, for different Sorts of Happiness. His *principal* Portion consists (as was observed above) in the right Entertainment of his *principal Part* : So that *rational* Delights undeniably constitute his *chief* Felicity : However, having *animal* Capacities of tasting Good, as well as *rational* ; and *these* having proper Goods provided for them, as well as the *other* ; and, as the *regular* Fruition of those *sensible* Goods renders his present Being the more delighting ; hereupon a Part of his *present* Happiness, may properly be said to consist also in *this*.

When he takes up indeed *entirely* with animal Gratifications and disregards his rational ; or *prefers* the former to the latter ; he either shamefully forgets, or otherwise disregards, his Rank of Being : he hereby descends among the Brute-Creation, and shews himself unworthy of the Order in which he was placed : which is so stupid a Degradation, as no Person of Understanding, can, *when duly regarding his Conduct*, be supposed to be chargeable with : and much less therefore, with descending lower in Enjoyment, than is to be observed in the *lowest* Species of Animals : and yet this is what *all* those *despicable Sensualists* are undeniably chargeable with, who place their whole Felicity, at least the principal Part of it, in *Excess* of sensual Enjoyment :— who *glut* their Appetites with Intemperance and Riot, instead of gratifying them in the Manner that was intended ; and hereby rob themselves of even those *animal* Fruitions, in which Part of their present Happiness was designed to consist. For, so *amazingly* kind and skilful hath the divine Constitution been ; that there is no Part of even *animal* Felicity, to be obtained to real Advantage, but by a *regular* Management. When we therefore, in any sensible Gratification, transgress the Rules, or exceed the Bounds, which Nature and Reason prescribe, we miss the Pleasure proposed by it : We get out of the Circuit where the intended Good is lodged ; and find nothing afterwards but

but *cloying, unnatural, pernicious* Gusts of sadly deceiving Good; which, instead of delighting the Sense, or Appetite, we propose to gratify, destroys the entertaining Taste of it; and hereby renders it unserviceable with respect to its proper End. Whereupon, the *Drunkard*, the *Glutton*, and the *GOATISH Debauchee*, most sottishly prevent even that *animal* Felicity of which they are rendered capable; as well as, run on those direful Woes which Temperance and Moderation would have rendered them Strangers to.

But, however hurtful such wrong Management may prove to any, the *right* Exercise of our *bodily* Capacities of tasting Pleasure, doth furnish such *allowed proper* Delight, as is certainly a Part of our present Felicity.

This I have thought adviseable to observe, with respect to *rational* and *sensible* Happiness.

I proceed to explain briefly, what I also understand by those *other* Distinctions before pointed at: viz. *real* Happiness, and *imaginary*. Accordingly I observe,

THIRDLY, “ That, as to *real* Happiness,
 “ there needs little to be said:—Nor would
 “ *this* Distinction have been particularly
 “ mentioned, had it not led the Way to
 “ what

“ what is proper to be observed concerning
 “ *imaginary*.”

Indeed, *real* Happiness is that only, as some may imagine, which can deserve particular Notice. And this would readily be admitted, in even the Sense it may be contended for, were Mankind delighted with nothing else but *solid* Good. But 'tis not easy, I believe, to determine plainly, wherein this *real* Happiness doth consist, however obvious the Nature of it in general may be supposed to be. Indeed, whatever may be said to be *real*, or true, conveys some positive Idea to those who apprehend, or believe it to be so: but then, in the Case of *Happiness*, the Term may as properly be applied to one Sort, as to another, when the Ground; or Object of such Happiness, doth *really* affect the Person, or Creature, spoken of; or, when such apprehended Case gives a positive Idea of the Fruition of some Good. So that even *imaginary* Happiness, may, in *this* Sense, be said to give *real* Pleasure to one who is thus affected with merely *fanciful* Good. However groundless and delusive his Imagination of such Good, and his fanciful Fruition of it, may be supposed by others to be; if the Whole *really* delights him, and produceth *uninjuriously* personal Enjoyment; he is as really happy, *whilst this is the Case*, as any other can be supposed to be, in the like
 delighting

delighting Entertainment resulting from the *most solid* Good, and likewise partaken of in the *most rational* Manner. They are both alike affected with Pleasure, however different the Grounds, and Means, of such Delight may be. The *fanciful* Percipient is, in his own Opinion, as happy as his Neighbour; and his own Judgment will be the Rule and Standard of his own Happiness, 'till 'tis some Way altered.

But *real* Happiness, as more properly understood, must be owned to be such as is in *itself*, as well as in the Opinion of the Person concerned, a proper and suitable Enjoyment of his State of Being. This, being *solid and true*, will continue, and not deceive: It will always be found the same; and will equally delight him at one Time, as at another, if alike disposed for it. Even *sensible* Goods that are the Ground of such proper Entertainment, will, whenever *regularly* enjoyed, afford to the Senses and Appetites they were designed to gratify, the same delighting Perceptions they afford at present, so long as those Capacities preserve their proper Taste.

Imaginary Fruitions, on the other Hand, depending solely on the Workings of *Fancy*, (which is a Power of Perception extremely variable, and greatly subject to Vicissitude) preserve not long their *full* Influence; or, those
Degrees

Degrees of Pleasure where-with they might affect at first. Whereas *well-grounded Delights*, of whatever Kind, being much less interrupted, and in their own Nature more lasting, are more to be depended on; and deserve, as in *themselves* considered, a much greater Regard.

But, whatever may be observed as to the *Nature* and *Reasons* of Things, *Mankind* are certainly influenced, in the present State, by wrong Appearances, and mere Conceit, in like manner as they are by Realities, and the best grounded Conceptions. Indeed, *Appearance* is the Ground of *all* the Notions we form concerning every thing relating to us; and of all our Determinations respecting every Part of our Conduct. For all things *appear* right to the most deluded Mind, whilst under Delusion; and *every* thing is *real* to one who thinks it so: nor can any Mistake affect him until he is brought to perceive it. — But this leads me to examine more directly *Imaginary Good*; and the usual Influence of *this* with respect to our present Happiness. I observe therefore,

FOURTHLY, “ That *fanciful* Delight hath
 “ also a very considerable Share, and very
 “ often the greatest, in the Felicity that is
 “ obtained in this Earthly State.”

Imagination,

Imagination, is evidently a Part of our present Constitution. It enters into our Make; and hath the like Influence as our other Powers. Yea, it seems to be the natural Result of those *imperfect* rational Faculties, with which we are endowed in our present imperfect State. Our Reason is so little qualified at present, to discern Things perfectly, that we form most of our Conceptions in a Way of *Conjecture*; and not of positive Knowledge: And what is this, but *imaginary* Conception? Whereupon there seems Ground to conclude; That *this* Capacity was given us, to assist our imperfect Reason in its present Usefulness. Most certainly the Entertainments of *this* Life would be very much diminished, both in Number and Agreeableness, were it not for the Influence of this serviceable Power. It is some times indeed instrumental in enlarging Afflictions: but is much more helpful to the Increase of Joy. Yea, the Pleasures and Gratifications of the present State, seem more to depend upon *imaginary* Good, than on what is *real*.

How little is there, *e. g.* in the ordinary Entertainments of *Wealth*, or *Honour* (those admired Sources of our present Happiness) that can be said to be *solid*? or to yield any other Delight than what is *imaginary*? The Gratification, even of our Senses and of almost every Appetite we have, depends much
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on *Imagination*. Indeed, there is scarce any Sort of sensible Good that gives its full Relish, I mean, that Measure of Delight we usually find in it, without the Help of *Imagination*. If it suit not our *Fancy*, as well as our Appetite, it is little agreeable. Yea, *Fancy*, some Times turns into *Distaste* a real Good; and occasions even a *Loathing*, of what is not only in itself desirable, but would highly delight, did it take the *Imagination*.

Further: *Mere Imagination* some times forms, by its own Influence, a fanciful Good; excites also an Appetite to it; and hereby produceth considerable Pleasure.

It having therefore so great Effect; and being likewise so serviceable to our present Entertainments; it seems to me, to be an implanted Power, or Adjunct to Reason, that was kindly designed, among other Views, "To communicate to Mankind a more equal Portion of proper Felicity, than the present State would otherwise have afforded:" and therefore I have thought it deserving the Notice I have taken of it. It is, as I conceive, of little Moment, to object; That the Felicity, or Pleasure, this Way obtained, hath no real Foundation; and, that it generally depends on Delusion and Mistake; For, since the Effects it produceth are manifestly the same that appear to be produced by other Causes; since the

the Pleasures *this* Way derived, affect Men in like manner, as those which result from more solid Goods; and have also *equal* Influence when affecting in the same Degree; We may, I think, conclude upon the Whole; “ That
 “ the present State of Men, may be rendered
 “ as agreeable, at certain Times, by *fanciful*
 “ Enjoyment, as by what is accounted *real*.”
 “ The *Effects* are real, altho’ the Causes may
 “ be wholly imaginary.”

Nor is the Opinion of others, who have a truer Notion of Things, to be regarded in such Cases: for every one is influenced by *his own* Apprehensions; and derives his Happiness from such Sentiments of Good, as *He himself* has fixed on. The Judgment of Another is no Rule for Me, in *any* Part of my Entertainments, unless I am some way led into His Apprehensions of Good, and taste the same Delight in it that *He* may declare he does. If not, I shall chuse for Myself what conduceth to my Felicity; and *cannot* but do so if under no Restraint.

On the Whole therefore: As *apprehended* Good, however *fanciful*, is so frequently instrumental to the Enjoyment of our Being in this Earthly State, it deserves not to be decried as a Dream or Shadow, that is of no Importance in the Matter of our Happiness; since
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our *present* Felicity may be found at Times, even *chiefly* to depend upon it.

Having thus endeavoured to represent the Nature of Happiness in general, in the several Views that have been mentioned; I conceive it adviseable; To consider next; What is also the Nature, and what may have been the Occasion, of those various affecting Evils, and consequent *Miseries*, to which all the Creatures in this World are rendered liable: for these seem to obstruct, and in some Instances wholly to prevent, that comfortable State of Existence, which some may imagine might reasonably be expected from the *Benevolence* and *Goodness* of the *grand Director* of all Things, who hath given to All their Being, and is thought to have assigned them the Station and Circumstances wherein they are found.—Let us now therefore proceed to this *other Inquiry*.

C H A P. II.

“ Concerning the apprehended *Evils*
 “ and *Miseries* which all the Crea-
 “ tures on Earth are subject to.”

*A*pprehended Evil and Misery, of one Kind and another, have every where, and in every Age of the World, so frequently appeared among the various Ranks of Creatures; and, in some Instances respecting *Mankind*, in so *astounding* a Manner, that many of the Heathen Philosophers, and some who professed themselves Christians, (viz. the Marcionites and Manichæans) were hereby led to imagine, That an Original *Evil* Being, had, together with a Good One, a considerable Hand, if not the greatest, in contriving and constituting this Earthly State of Things. And a great many others have thought it an almost unsurmountable Difficulty, to adjust those strange Appearances to the acknowledged Perfections of God. But, as we must necessarily conclude, that *infinite* Wisdom cannot possibly err in any of its Directions; nor, that the *Fountain* of Benevolence and Goodness can be chargeable with Cruelty, or a Want of Kindness, to any of his Creatures, unless deserved; let us carefully examine the Ground of these Apprehensions, with respect to the Nature, and the *Origin* also of Evil.

Evil then in general, is commonly conceived of in two very different Views. In one of which it is termed, *Moral Evil*; and in the other, *Natural*. The *first* Sort, my present Discourse is not directly concerned in: however I shall just point at it, for the better introducing what I shall observe on the latter.

— *Moral Evil* then, is understood to consist in the Depravity of Mens Manners:—in behaving inconsistently with our rational Nature, and with the Nature of Things relating to us: or, in other Words, in doing what the Law engraven on our Minds forbids us to do; or, in *not* doing what it requires; whereby we oppose both the Will and the Authority of Him who *made* us, as well as contradict our own Reason. *This*, is Evil in *Conduct*. But I shall not enlarge on this: and therefore proceed to consider, SECONDLY, “The Case of *Natural Evil*.”

Now, what is thus termed, consists most properly, in a Creature's being affected with *Pain*, of one Kind or another; by whatever Means produced. And this is apprehended a Case of Misery, in Proportion to the Degrees in which the Sufferer feels it. Indeed, by a common Figure in Language, the *Causes* of such Sufferings are frequently represented as the Evils themselves to which the Creatures are liable; but properly and strictly speaking,

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'tis *Pain* only that is the apprehended Evil, for the *Cause* of any Thing, is evidently very different from the Effect produced by it. — But let us more directly consider, what may most properly be termed an *Evil*.

Now there are, as I conceive, two distinct Ideas that concur usually in forming this Character : viz. *Pain*, and *Detriment* : not Pain alone ; altho' this is most agreeable to the common Sentiment ; but Pain attended with Damage ; or Pain that is no Way compensated. When any such Pain is endured, as proves on the Whole eventually *detrimental* ; or, which *finally* ends in the Creature's Damage, that is, when the Amount of all, including correlative attending Circumstances, deserves to be thus accounted :—In such Degree as *this* is the Case, a Sufferer may be said (if there be any such Person who is thus *unavoidably* and *undeservedly* afflicted) to undergo providential *real* Evil, or *pure Pain*. But then, on the other Hand, when Pain is needful, or *conducive*, to obtain an over-balancing Good, or when it is connected with any such Good, it cannot deserve, in *such* Circumstances, to be accounted an *Evil* : for, as thus considered, it merits rather the Character of a *Good*. 'Tis true, the real Nature of Things cannot possibly be changed. Pain is as really Pain, so far as it affects the Sufferer,

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altho' connected with the greatest Good, as when it terminates in Loss or Damage. But the Circumstances of the Case may alter its *Character*, altho' such Circumstances cannot annul any one essential Property of it. From a Want of attending to this, we very often err in the Opinions we form of most Things, and in the consequent Representations we are wont to give of them. In most Cases, particularly of *Good* and *Evil*, we commonly derive our Notions and Representations from the *naked Natures* (as I take Leave to express it) of One and the Other: whereas we ought, in *all* Cases, to consider them as clothed with their several connected Circumstances, so far as we can discover them; since they are, (as was noted above) when separately considered, and when in Conjunction with *these*, a Sort of different Objects, which, if well examined, would appear in a different View; and there-upon occasion very different Conceptions; so far, at least, as to constitute a manifest different Case.

Who is there, *e. g.* that accounts the Toils and Hardships, the Difficulties and Dangers, which are commonly undergone in the Pursuits of Wealth and Honour, as real Evils, when the Prospects of Success are fair and inviting; and especially *after* he has succeeded to any considerable Advantage in such Pursuits? And yet each of these will be acknowledged to be
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an *Evil* as in itself considered ; and is always avoided as such, when there is no *Premium* to be proposed by submitting to it.

In like manner, Men are generally reconciled to the most distasteful Physick for the Recovery of Health ; yea, to the Amputation of the most useful Member, if apprehended needful for the Preservation of Life. The Disagreeableness of the Means, and the Pain they may occasion, are disregarded, or *submitted* to, on account of the *End* proposed. They put on in this View, a different Appearance from what they naturally have when considered in themselves ; and hereupon become Objects of Esteem and *Election* : they cease, in such Circumstances, to have their natural Influence on the Mind ; and therefore must deserve a different Denomination from what belongs to them in their *naked* State : they are indeed different Objects (as was intimated above) in their *relative* Appearance, from what they are in their *purely natural* ; since they affect and operate differently. Let me briefly touch on this, as a farther Confirmation of what I here intend, in the most affecting of those Instances before pointed at ; —*the Amputation of a Member.*—Suppose then the Anguish of the Operation appears before the Mind of the Person to undergo it, *in all its Terrors.* How extremely shocking would this Case be found, were there no Cir-

cumstance attending it to administer the least Support ! How would *all Nature* tremble, and start back, on even the first Glimpse of the Apparatus to effect it !

But let us turn the Tables a little, and view it in a different Light. Let us conceive of *another* such Sufferer, under a strong Hope of preserving, by such Endurance, a Life otherwise quite despaired of. What a wonderful Alteration will this effect ! What Courage and Constancy will it excite in *this* Man ? How will it, at once animate his enduring Powers, and sooth and mitigate every painful Sensation ; as well as draw off his Attention from a Multitude of those, which the Other may view with Horror ?

From *this* Instance, it evidently appears, That Mens submitting to a less Evil, even barely to avoid a greater, is accounted and chosen as a valuable *Good* : and much more readily is it thus esteemed, when greatly overballancing *positive* Goods, may be proposed and obtained. The *Means* indeed of obtaining almost every Sort of Good, perhaps of every *present* Good, are, in themselves considered, painful, or disagreeable, in one Respect or another. *Acquired* Wealth and Honour, are evidently thus obtained : and so likewise are Skill and Dexterity in every Art ; and *Eminence* especially in every Science :
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moreover, the *Production* of every Creature is necessarily attended with Pain.—Nor, can this admirable Direction of Things be justly wondered at: for, had not this Method of propagating the Creatures, and of conveying suitable Goods to them, been contrived and established, the present World, and present State of Things, could not have taken Place in the Manner they now appear; and had they not taken Place, there would then have been a considerable Chasm, or wide Gap in the Universe, that might have been filled up to great Advantage, and was *needful* perhaps to be filled, in order to complete the *Universal Scheme*. Whereupon the not doing it, would have appeared a strange Defect, or Oversight, in the *Grand Contriver*. But, *consummate* Wisdom, not being capable of erring in any projected Scheme, or in *any Part* of its Workmanship, must be supposed to have had sufficient Reason, for forming this Earthly System, and every Part belonging to it, in the Manner they are actually formed*: And
also

* No Machine, if *perfectly* formed to answer any proposed Ends, can admit I think of being formed in any other Manner than it is, in even the minutest Part; so as to answer *every* such Proposal to *equal* Advantage *every* Way; unless different Methods of Procedure, may equally accomplish, in *every* View, the very same Thing; which I imagine is impossible; and especially when the Design is vastly complicated, and brancheth itself out into numberless subordinate Views. *Perfection*,

also for *regulating* every Part as 'tis now found : and no doubt, hath directed all to as great Advantage, *every Way*, as the universal Scheme would properly admit *.

Wherefore on the Whole, we have Reason to conclude ; That the Introduction of *Evil* into this Earthly System, or rather, of what is *thus accounted*, being a fit, if not a necessary Means, to the effecting desirèable Good, is an admirable Contrivance that admits not the least room for Blame or Misconstruction : rather it appears, as in this View, even to *our* low Understandings, an *amazing Reach* both of Skill and Kindness, which sets forth the divine Perfection in as eminent and conspicuous a Light, as any other Manifestation of it can be supposed to do.

in *any* Case, cannot, as I conceive, admit of any Sort of Alteration, in any Part belonging to it ; since this would imply two Perfections at least, in the same Thing, and on the same Account ; which appears to me an Absurdity : for then the very same Thing might be different from what it is, and yet the very same. Besides ; in every Piece of *completely perfect Workmanship*, there can neither be a *Defect*, nor yet a *Superfluity* : and every Part hath an inseparable Connection with the Whole ; and bears a proper Respect, one Way or another to every other Part.—I might illustrate this further, was there any Occasion to confirm the Observation to which it refers.

* Origin of Evil. p. 18, 19, &c.

If any one finds not Satisfaction in what hath been suggested concerning this difficult Point ; and may want, or desire, to be farther informed ; I would entreat him to consider ;— Whether or not, he be really satisfied with his present Being?—with the Appetites and Senses inserted in his Constitution?—with the external Goods provided for him?—or even with the *Reason* he finds himself endowed with?— If he answers in the Affirmative : I would then desire him, to consider farther ; which Way he would propose to partake of Flesh and Blood, or to share with his fellow Mortals in the present Form of his Body, without being liable to Sicknes, Pain, and Death? or, without being exposed to any *other* apprehended Evil which this bodily Constitution doth now subject him to?—In what Manner would he desire, *e. g.* to have his Organ of *Vision* formed ; so as not to convey Impressions of *distasteful* Objects, as well as of those that delight him?—Or, how could he contrive the Sense of *Taste*, if it were not to be receptive of *displeasing* Relishes ; but purely of those that are agreeable?—Or that of *Hearing* ; —if it were to admit only delightful and harmonious Sounds ; but none that are at all offensive?—In what Manner also, would he propose to have his *Reason* implanted in him? or, to enjoy the Benefit of *this* distinguishing Faculty? if it might only be serviceable in directing and chusing aright, in every Concern

cern relating to him? and, if it might not be liable to any Mistake; nor capable of being perverted, or misemployed, to any *wrong* Purpose?

I might easily expatiate on those obvious Absurdities, which such Questions would suggest, but account it needless to add more on this Head.

But it may, after all, be objected in general, as it *actually* has been; "That this
"earthly System might have been better contrived, and more consistently with the apprehended Perfection of the *Great Artist*;
"in particular, with the *Benevolence* and *Goodness* which are usually ascribed to him."

To this I would reply:—what *Amazement* is it! that so mean a Creature as *Man*, should presume to arraign the incomparable Works of WISDOM! or, should conceit, he was capable of excelling the Skill of OMNISCIENCE!—Is he so well acquainted with the VAST MACHINE of the *Universe*! as to discern plainly, what Part of it is superfluous; or what is wrongly contrived? what might have been omitted, without disconcerting the Remainder? or, what Part might have been directed to greater Advantage than it is? one would think, such an *arrogant wild Conceit* could not possibly arise in the Mind of any Man.

Man.—No doubt the Whole is so *stupendously wonderful*, that, not the least considerable Part could be well omitted, or placed otherwise than it is, without affecting the Harmony, if not preventing the Design, that was *most wisely* proposed by this AMAZING FABRICK*. And, we have abundant Reason to conclude; yea, to be fully and firmly persuaded; that this *earthly* System in particular, however small a Part of the VASTLY EXTENDED UNIVERSE, is various Ways, with all its Furniture, most admirably adjusted, to complete, in its Place, the *Grand Design*: for, there are numberless Demonstrations of it, which plainly appear even to *human* View, that prove it beyond Denial. Should therefore those *Mites of Entity* be so much dissatisfied with their Make, or with any Appointments respecting them, as to find fault with the divine Contrivance; they would herein discover such *sottish Arrogance, Ignorance, and Conceit*, as were not to be equalled by any thing appearing in Nature; their *wild Presumption* excepted! But I forbear to enlarge on this Reproach to even *Humanity*, as hoping there is no where *now* found such astonishing Stupidity and Extravagances among *Christians*, as there formerly were in the Heathen World.

* See the Note, p. 23, 24.

It would not be difficult, to clear up and strengthen what before hath been suggested, were it really needful. But I am willing to flatter myself, there hath enough already been offered, to satisfy those who are capable of entering into *this* Part of my Argument, and may *candidly* examine what hath been observed: besides, I shall have Occasion hereafter, to apply those Considerations to some particular Instances, when, what hath here been remarked, will again be touched on, and, I hope, illustrated to farther Satisfaction, if desired.

Thus have I endeavoured to lay a *general* Foundation for what I chiefly aim at in this Discourse, by examining, “ *First*, the Nature and Ground of *Happiness*; and pointing out the principal Views in which ’tis usually considered. And, *Secondly*: By making the like Inquiry concerning the Nature and Origin of the various Evils, and consequent apprehended Miseries, to which *all* the Creatures in *this* World are rendered liable; and especially our *Human* Species.”

Having thus taken those two preliminary Steps, I shall now more directly enter on my main Subject. Accordingly, I shall strive to account for those strangely different Portions
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of apprehend *Good* and *Evil*, which seem to have been distributed with a very unequal Hand, among the Individuals of *every* Species that come within our View ; and especially among our *own*.

And, *First*, I shall consider the Case, with respect to *irrational* Creatures. For, as those are subjected to many of the same Evils that are observable among Men ; and, as it cannot be supposed, they will ever be compensated in a future State * ; I cannot see, how the Dispensations of God can be well accounted for with respect to *those*, unless some *other* Method be taken for it, than hath generally been fixed on in relation to *Mankind*.— I shall attempt to solve this grand Difficulty, by prosecuting the Observations already made concerning *Good* and *Evil* ; and, by applying them more directly to the Case of those Creatures that are thought unequally treated.

* In *this* particularly, and in some other Instances, I find myself obliged to differ in Sentiments, from the acute and judicious Author I have mentioned, and referred to ; as his valuable Treatise cannot, I imagine, be well supported in some few Particulars.

C H A P. III.

“ The Appointments of Providence
 “ considered with respect to the
 “ various Kinds of *Irrational* Crea-
 “ tures which God hath formed
 “ in *this* World.”

SINCE the whole Creation is evidently the Work of a divine Hand, and plainly discovers, even to *Human* Minds, a most stupendous Stretch of Skilfulness and Power ; it leads us to conceive of the GRAND ARCHITECT OF THE UNIVERSE, as a Being possessed in the highest Degree imaginable, of all those Excellencies and Perfections that tend to exalt his Character. And, as we cannot but judge of God, in all Cases, according to the Notions we are capable of forming of Things, there seems to be sufficient Ground to conclude ; that his original Aim, in giving Being to *every* Species of Creatures, and placing them severally in the Condition and Circumstances wherein they are found, was *perfectly right*, and *worthy of Himself*, whatever Difference may appear in his various Allotments to any of them. And there are several obvious Considerations that lead us *farther* to conclude ; he certainly proposed to make all his
 Creatures

Creatures as happy, or, to put them into the Enjoyment of as much Good, as the Natures given them was rendered capable of; and, as the State of Things relating to them would properly admit *. Nor can we in the least doubt, but that both were so admirably contrived, as to suit as nearly, as infinite Wisdom, connected with infinite Goodness, did find adviseable. We have therefore sufficient Reason to be convinced; “ That neither a case of “ Misery, nor any *Degree of pure Evil*, was “ intended for any Creatures on the Whole “ of their Existence.” I thus express myself; because it ought to be considered; that whatever Portion of Good or Evil, may be the Lot of any at a particular Time, or in occasional Circumstances, it cannot properly give a Character of their State of Being *in the general*; nor therefore to their manner of Treatment, by Him who hath ordered all Things.

And let it also be considered, that no Creatures can justly be said, to be in *any Degree* miserable, on the Whole of their Existence, when their pleasing Entertainments do but *equal* their Sufferings; and especially when they *exceed* them in the lowest Measure. Nor, can the Pains they may undergo deserve the

* Origin of Evil. p. 46.

Character of an *Evil*, (as hath been proved before) when needful, or instrumental, to obtain a preponderating Good. — I observe farther: “ That the *Supreme Being*, in contriving and establishing the Laws of Nature; “ and in particular, in forming the various “ Species of Creatures, and what concerneth “ them, seems to have been obliged, from “ the evident Reasons of Things, to regard “ chiefly the *common Good of all*, as they were “ designed to contribute to each other’s Happiness:” for, an extended *common Good* is manifestly preferable, in proportion to its Extent, to a Good that is limited. And so must the Good of a *superior Species* of Creatures, be preferable to the Good of one inferior to it. *These* things are so evident, that no reasonable Person can be supposed to contest them. Should therefore what is thought an Evil, in respect to a particular Species, be the necessary Means of promoting, or preserving, the more considerable Good of one superior to it, and hereupon deserving greater Regard; such Evil as this, altho’ it may considerably affect the Sufferers, ought certainly to be allowed by the All-wise Director of all Things, and submitted to by the others, were they *rational*; provided their State of Being is rendered eligible on the *whole* of it; and especially when it admits of the like comfortable Fruitions as that of their Superiors may.

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There can therefore be no room, in *this* supposed Constitution of Things, to censure such Appointments, or to object at all against them. The Case became *unavoidable*, in a System so variously framed as the present System is ; which we have Reason to believe, is *most admirably* contrived to correspond with a *general widely extensive* Plan, wherein this hath its proper Part. *Human* Minds can attain but very little Knowledge of this *general amazing* System : nay, it *vastly* surmounts the *utmost* Stretch of our low Capacities. But *this* however is apparent : “ That either those
 “ Creatures which are made to subsist on
 “ others their Inferiors, must not have
 “ been formed ; or not formed with the
 “ Natures and Appetites they now have ;
 “ or otherwise this *imagined* Evil to the
 “ inferior Tribes must necessarily have
 “ been admitted.” And if Matters, after all, have been so wonderfully contrived, and so *kindly* also directed, as that the *appearing* Suffering, or even *Extinction* of certain Creatures, is either no *real* Evil to them, or no such Evil as makes, on the *whole* of their Case, any real Distinction with respect to their Happiness ; but their State of Being is alike kindly provided for, as is that of their Superiors ; there can then be much less room to raise Objections on any such Account.

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That this is certainly the Case, as to all those Creatures that are made subservient to others in a way of Suffering, I apprehend is undeniable ; and will I hope be made appear in the Progress of this Discourse.

'Tis true, a great Part of the *animal* Creation, seems to have been formed, and designed *in part*, as proper Food for our *human* Species ; and numberless others, for the Subsistence of *superior* Creatures among their *animal* Tribes ; but 'tis plainly discernable, as to Creatures *thus* designed, that in the proper Times of their Enjoyment, they taste, as well as others, the several Delights prepared for them ; (which are the only Pleasures they were formed for) and may therefore be as kindly dealt with, on the *whole* of their Existence, notwithstanding the Appointment that is here supposed, as any other *irrational* Creatures are. *Every* earthly Creature is made subject to Death, and to the ordinary Pains, or apprehended Evils, that attend their State of Being. And such as are soon dispatched for the Use of Man, or to support some other Animals of a superior Kind, have herein even a *Privilege*, beyond those whose Dissolution is wrought in the natural Way.

Having premised these Things, I proceed to the Proof of what was intimated above ;

above ; viz. “ That God originally designed to make all his Creatures as happy, or, to put them into the Enjoyment of as much Good, as their State of Being, and the State of Things relating to them, would properly admit : and in this he seems to have manifested a *similar Kindness* to all.”

Now we have (as I conceive) sufficient Reason to conclude this,

FIRST, “ From the *consummate Wisdom*, and the consequent *most perfect Goodness*, which we cannot but suppose in the *great Original* of all Things.”

SECONDLY, “ From the *Relation* he stands in to the several Creatures he has formed.”

And THIRDLY, “ From the *nature* and *meetness of Things*, as they respect each other.”——We may form, I say, such Conclusions,

FIRST, “ From the *consummate Wisdom*, and the consequent *most perfect Goodness*, which we cannot but suppose in the *great Original* of all Things.”

INTELLIGENCE, and POWER, are (as I conceive) the prime Perfections of God; and are necessarily connected with each other, altho' in their Nature distinct and separate. The First, viz. *Intelligence*, or *Wisdom*, seems to be the Original of all the other divine Attributes, excepting *Power*; and also to be the Guide and Governor of *this*. But, tho' *Power* be a dissimilar, and very different Perfection, it must necessarily attend on *Wisdom*, and become subservient to all its Measures; otherwise the Supreme Being might be thought the most unhappy of all Beings: for, we can scarcely conceive of a more affecting Cause of Grief, than to see, in numberless Instances, what is fitting to be done, and the proper Means of doing it, and not have suitable Abilities to accomplish it, or set about it.

I therefore consider these two most eminent Excellencies, as *unoriginated* Perfections; which are in a peculiar Manner, *essential* to the Supreme Being; and, which set him before our Minds in the most exalted View. But, since my present Inquiry hath no direct concern in the Attribute of *Power*, I shall wave any farther Remarks on *this*; and proceed to consider the proper

per Influence of that *other* unoriginated Eminency of God: viz. his *Wisdom*. And, as *Goodness* seems to be a special Consequent of *this* Perfection, I shall first remark concerning his *Goodness*;—That *this* subordinate Attribute consists, as I conceive, “ In
 “ a benevolent Disposition to communicate
 “ Good throughout the Universe, so far as
 “ there is proper Room for it: which Dis-
 “ position seems naturally, if not necessa-
 “ rily, to result from a *perfect Discernment*
 “ of Things.” For, wherever there is proper Room to extend, or propagate Good; *i. e.* whenever ’tis adviseable, all things considered; (of which no Being but the *Supreme* can be an adequate Judge) there is then a Reason to communicate it, commensurate to the Case. And one who perceiveth this, and hath also Ability to effect it, is, as I would humbly express it, *called upon*, by the Nature and Reasons of Things, to exercise herein his Power, in proportion to the Degrees of the Call; which *Call* the God of perfect Rectitude, cannot be supposed, at any Time, or in any Case, to disregard.

So that the SUPREME BEING, by discerning all Things perfectly, seems to be led, among the other Fruits of his Know-
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ledge, to this beneficent and indulgent Disposition which we term, *Goodness*. *Goodness* therefore in God, and every other Perfection, excepting *Power*, is really no other than the Fruit of *Knowledge*; or, than the natural Result of a *perfect* Discernment of Things.

Now, whether we consider the proper Effects either of *Wisdom*, or of *Goodness*, it will lead us to conclude; That God's original Aim in giving Being to every Species of Creatures, was, to *communicate Good throughout the Universe*: and the rather may we thus conclude; as his own most exalted Entertainment may chiefly perhaps be thus derived: and also as it tends to raise, in all rational Creatures, the most exalted Conceptions of him they are capable of attaining. Moreover, this same Path will lead us yet farther, to this *consequent* Conclusion; viz. That the introducing of *pure Evil*, in *any* Part of the Creation, I mean, of *undeserved* Evil no way compensated, must be as distant from God as is the foulest Iniquity. Indeed, *pure Evil* can give no other Entertainment, than in a Way of *Malice*, *Ill-nature*, or *Revenge*. This cannot therefore be *designedly* produced, or any way occasioned, by a Being of *perfect Rectitude*; — by the GOD OF ALL
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PERFECTION ; whose Nature cannot *admit* of any such odious Principles. — I presume to add ; — That to inflict, or occasion Evil, without a View of some preponderating Good, is to act *without a Motive* ; I mean, without a Motive which *Reason* may approve of. Now Reason is the Director of all Actions that are not merely animal. And TRUTH and GOOD are the only Objects that Reason can *ultimately* fix upon. TRUTH, in *whatever* Case, is an *eminent Good*. I understand by *Truth*, — a *true or right connexion of Things* ; which is, I apprehend, the only proper Notion of it. And the suiting of Things harmoniously doth generally, if not always, lead to the best Enjoyment of *Good*. So that, *Truth* and *Good* may seem to coincide ; and are, as I conceive, inseparable. On the other Hand, causeless Evil, or Evil inflicted without Desert, or, without a Prospect of over-balancing Good attending it, can have *no* Motive that is *rational*. To inflict *this*, is, (as will be further shewn under a following Head) to join Things *unnaturally* : both *Truth* and *Good*, those principal Objects of Reason, are hereby contradicted ; which the *lowest* rational Being, whilst acting agreeably to his Nature, is incapable of doing ; and much more therefore, the *Highest*. 'Tis, as I said, a connecting Things

unnaturally; or rather, an *Attempt* to connect them: for, their dissimilar Natures forbid a true Connexion: 'Tis *perfect wrong acting*: the Effects of which become *monstrous*: extremely unshapely: and strangely disagreeing.--How then can it be supposed; that the God of *perfect Rectitude*;—of *Wisdom, Truth, and Goodness*, can, 'in any Case, be chargeable with *this*? or ever give Occasion for the lowest Degree of such a Charge? *He*, most certainly, must be acknowledged to have a *perfect* Discernment of every Thing; and also to propose the *exactest* Agreement in all Things: and therefore in all his Works, and in all his Ways, must *strictly* observe the Rule of *Truth*;—can join nothing but what rightly suits. And his *Goodness* in particular, must always lead him to make way for *Good*;—for * all that Good which the respective
Natures

* I can see but little in that Argument which seems to arise from hence; and, which an *excellent Author* hath urged;—"That, according to this Opinion, God's *Goodness* would have *obliged* him, "to have produced from Eternity, the utmost Possibilities of Happiness in *all Places*, and *at all Times*."—Perhaps, from Eternity, the *like* numberless Kinds and Measures of Happiness, were actually produced that now appear.—Nor can I perceive any greater Absurdity in this; I will venture to add, — nor *as great*; as in supposing an *immense*
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Natures of the Creatures he hath formed, and the Nature of Things relating to them, will well admit; and therefore must promote always, on this other Account, (as will presently be farther shewn) the most harmonious Connexion of Things; because *Good* will be the Result of this to every Creature concerned.

Void thro' the Universe, numberless Ages before the acknowledged Creation actually took Place.—And, to argue on any Occasion, about what is possible to be done by an omnipotent Being; or, what boundless Wisdom and Goodness would oblige the Deity to effect; doth seem to be as wild an Attempt, as to pretend to grasp the Universe. It would, I think, be presumptuous in the highest created Being. 'Tis enough for us to know; That God hath always acted most perfectly worthy of himself in whatever he hath done; and, that all his Measures have always been guided by unerring Wisdom; and therefore been productive of as great an Extent of Good, as he thought proper to make any Discoveries of. But who can take upon him to be a competent Judge of this? or to fix the Limits of divine Proceeding in whatever Case?

Should an infinite Being exert fully his boundless Perfections, he would *infinitely* display them in all *possible* Undertakings! But, how soon, and perfectly would this Thought bewilder us, should we take upon us to pursue it in any *one* Instance!—It must transcend *boundlessly* even the *most enlarged* created Mind. And therefore, for *finite* Creatures; for *Man* especially, to talk thus of *Infinity*, is a Sort of Language I can by no means understand.

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I do therefore conclude, upon the whole; That there was *nothing* but *Good*, either immediate, or consequential, originally aimed at in the *whole Creation*; and therefore, that *every* Species of Creatures which exist in *this* World, as well as Mankind, are certainly put into a State of Being, which may render them as happy as their respective Natures, and the various Things relating to them, would properly admit.

For what Reasons those Creatures are so variously formed; and formed as they are; and on what Accounts external Things relating to them, are thus prepared, hath been in Part already pointed at, and will farther be made appear in another Place.

But, besides the Considerations I have here pointed at, we are farther led to make the like Conclusions,

SECONDLY, “ From the *Relation* God “ stands in to the several Creatures he hath “ formed.”

We can conceive of no nearer Relation between *any* Beings, nor of any more engaging among *rational* Beings, than what results from giving, and receiving Existence.
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These Relations we term, when respecting the latter, *parental* and *filial*.

Now, as God is most properly the Original of every Creature, since all have received their Existence from him; he, may therefore be considered as the *common Parent* of all. And, as the Endearment resulting from this Relation, is conspicuous and surprizing in every Species of Creatures towards their Young, altho' but *instrumentally* concerned in bringing them into Being, there seems Reason to suppose the like, in the great Original of *all* Beings, towards every Creature that *he* hath formed: for, since God hath inserted this *amazing Storge* this natural *tender* Disposition, in even the least considerable Creatures that come within our View; we may very reasonably conclude, he is himself possessed of the same, in a more exalted and perfect Manner, towards every Species of Creatures he hath given Being to: for these are more properly his own Production, than the Young of any Creatures can be said to be of the Parents, or Dams, which were but the *Instruments* of conveying Being to them.

Nor can this be justly charged, either as an extravagant, or yet a groundless Imagination, in respect to Creatures of even the *minutest*

minuteſt Kinds, any more than of thoſe of the *highſt* Order: for, whatever Difference there may be between them, or, however diſtant their Natures and Capacities are ſuppoſed to be; they are all *alike* produced by him; and became thus diſtant from one another, by the all-commanding Influence of his wiſely directing Will. And may we not therefore conclude, that all were deſigned to be made as happy, as the reſpective Natures given them were rendered capable of? moſt evident it is; that ſuch rich Proviſion hath been made for all, with regard to their Support, their Preſervation, and Entertainment, as ſeems to be alike indulgent. Their very different Capacities and Taſtes will not indeed admit of the ſame *Kinds*, or the ſame *meaſure* of Good; but every Species may obtain ſuch Portions of *proper* Good, as may ſuit, and alſo *fill*, their various Capacities, however diſtant from each other; and therefore may be ſuppoſed to be *alike* happy, in their various Ways of enjoying themſelves. — But I am not willing to purſue this Conſideration farther, leſt I too much ſtartle thoſe, whoſe eſtabliſhed Notions may diſincline, if not diſable them, to examine impartially, and with needful Attention, the Ground on which I have raiſed it. And therefore I ſhall only in general obſerve farther; That
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if God be considered under the Notion of a *Parent*, we may from *hence* also conclude; he intended for all his Creatures, *all* that Good which the Natures given them were fitted to enjoy, so far as the general System in which he thought proper to place them, would well admit. And the *other* Consideration I before mentioned will corroborate this Conclusion, viz.

THIRDLY, “ The *Nature* and *Meetness* of Things, as they respect each other.”

So *amazingly* hath God contrived, constituted, and established, the several Parts of the Creation, that all those Things which have any Relation or Respect to each other, are so nicely proportioned, and so exactly adjusted, that they *admirably tally*, when rightly set together; and fitly and *sweetly* answer the several Ends proposed by them. Otherwise indeed they would not have been the Product of *consummate* Wisdom. From hence therefore we may conclude; That *Order* and *Regularity*, *perfect* good Agreement, and what best tends to delight and benefit the several percipient Beings concerned, arise and issue from the whole. And, from this admirable Connexion of Things, have TRUTH and GOOD, those noble Objects of Reason, of *consummate*
Reason

Reason especially, been kindly and happily produced : the result of which we properly term, a *meetness* or *fitness* of Things. Whereas, on the other Hand, when *dis*-similar Objects, or *dis*-agreeing Natures, are jumbled together, or blended one with the other, there naturally ariseth *Discord* ; —a kind of *War* between them ; *Confusion*, *Jarring*, and *Tumult*, are the unhappy Effects of such strange Commixture: so that, *no* Sort of *Good* can be *this* way produced ; nor any valuable End, in any measure answered : rather, *Mischief*, or *Hurt*, if not *Destruction*, or *Misery*, to one or other of the *Creatures* herein concerned, must unavoidably become the unhappy Event of *this*.

Now, as *perfect* Knowledge and Discernment must plainly perceive, the Nature, Tendency, and Event of all Things; and cannot but aim, in *all* Cases, at the Production of *Good*; and, *at nothing else but Good*, so far as the Good of the Whole can be connected with the Good of Individuals ; therefore must *Meetness* be the absolute *invariable* Rule of every Part of *divine* Agency, in whatever hath respect to any created Beings. For the Want of a right Connection of Things, will certainly issue in the Production of *Evil* : which a perfectly

perfectly wise Procedure will always carefully avoid.

This *other* Consideration then may further satisfy us ; “ That no *one* Creature “ can have Existence given it, with a “ View of rendering it miserable ; or yet “ of confining it to a State of Being less “ eligible than Non-Existence.” For, what can be more unsuitable and repugnant, than *Innocence* and *Misery* ? the very *Nature* of Things forbids such Connexion : and the Perfections of God will not admit of it. Light and Darkness may be sooner blended, than such perfectly inconsistent and opposite Things. — I conceive it therefore to be undeniable ; That *every* Creature, however designed, or, in whatever Circumstances *providentially* placed, was certainly intended to enjoy a State of Being, *desireable* on the whole of it. And this is all that could reasonably be expected ; and I believe, all that could be well effected, in respect to this *earthly* System of Beings. The State of Things in the *present* World would not *admit* of a wiser and kinder Management. The Sufferance indeed of *Evil*, in Conjunction with *out-weighing* Good, whereby it ceaseth to deserve the Character, is, in *this* State, an *unavoidable* Case, which was not to be remedied. Nor can we reasonably desire it should : for, whilst the
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latter preponderates, with regard to every Creature, there can be no Ground for the very least Complaint: rather, there is evidently abundant Reason, to admire highly the *stupendous Contrivance*; and to *adore* the Goodness manifested in it. Admitting therefore, that the Existence of some Creatures may be attended with various affecting Evils; it must however be concluded, on the *whole*, that their Existence is a Favour to them. And *Kindness*, and *Innocency*, will very well accord, however disagreeing the contrary Case may be.

So that, on *this* Supposal, the Law of Meetness is no way infringed; nor the Rule of Equity in the least violated. The Creature and its Circumstances are unexceptionably joined together.

Upon the whole therefore; whether we consider, “ The *Wisdom* and *Goodness* of
 “ the grand Contriver of all Things: or,
 “ the *Relation* God stands in to every Creature he hath formed: or, the *Nature*
 “ and *Meetness* of Things, as they respect
 “ each other:” On these several Accounts, and especially if *connected*, there is certainly sufficient Reason to conclude; That nothing but *Good* was originally proposed, in every Part of the Creation: and, in particular

cular, in giving Being to our *human* Species; and in placing *Men* severally in the Station and Circumstances wherein they are found; so far as those Circumstances may be properly ascribed to a *divine* Direction of Things.

“ But how is it *possible*, as some may object, that this can be made appear, with any Degree of Satisfaction, in respect to Mankind, if we consider only their manifest State in *this* World? ’tis plain, (it may be said) to a *Demonstration*; that there are no Species of *earthly* Creatures, among whom there appears so *amazing* an Inequality, in almost every respect, as among the Individuals of our own Order.”

As the Solution of this *grand Difficulty*, at least in some measure, was the principal thing I aimed at in attempting this Subject, I shall now confine the following Part of this Discourse, to the Case of *Mankind*; which is; it must be owned, not a little astonishing in some remarkable Instances.

—’Tis well known; that many have been situated in the most delightful Countries, where all things richly abound to gratify every Appetite, and to fill up every Desire: when others have been destined to

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Wastes and Desarts, where the bare *Necessaries* of Life are scarcely some times to be obtained, with all the Care, Affiduity, and Labour, they are capable of exerting; besides the prodigious Hardships unavoidably resulting, from either the swelling Heats, or otherwise the benumbing Colds, of the unhappy Climates to which they are confined. *One*, is an Heir of Honour and Fullness: *Another*, is the Child of Meanness and Indigency. *One*, comes into Being with all the Advantages of Health and Comeliness: *Another*, in Deformity; and with so sickly a Constitution, as intails upon him almost numberless Disorders, attended with Pains, or Languishments, which constantly perhaps afflict him thro' the whole of Life.

Such widely different Portions of imagined Good and Evil, may *seem* to have been distributed, among the *human* Species in particular; not equitably and impartially, according to *appearing* Desert; but *arbitrarily*, or *casually*; as if they were the Effects of either a despotick, or an unguided Will. Such hath been the Case, with respect to *Mankind*, in all Ages of the World; still is, and ever like to be. So strangely unequal, as hath been commonly apprehended, and so full of Inconsistency, if we judge of those Matters with a View confined to the
present

present Life: so directly contrary, in many Cases, to what might be expected from a common *Parent*, whose *Goodness*, as well as *Wisdom*, is acknowledged to be most perfect!

The usual Method of accounting for those strange Appearances, hath been; to consider a *future* State of Being, in Conjunction with the *present*; and to suppose, that all Inequalities which appear in *this* Life, will be perfectly righted in *another*; when every undeserved Suffering will be abundantly compensated, and every Thing brought into a perfect Equipoise: whereupon, every Individual will *then* appear to have been treated, upon the *whole* of his Existence, with the most exact Equity; and not the least Room will *then* be found for any Censure or Misconstruction.

But, to account *this* way for those strange Appearances, is, to take for granted what many have denied; and, what the wisest among the Heathens have been very far from being firmly persuaded of; viz. a *future* Existence. So that, the very same Constitution of Things, which hath induced some to conclude, there must certainly be a future State of Being intended

for *Mankind*, hath wrought on others the quite contrary Effect. And, I must freely own, that the Argument to prove it which is thus founded, doth not appear to me to be so evidently conclusive, (for the Reasons before suggested respecting *animal* Creatures, and, on some other Accounts) as hath been generally apprehended: nor doth this weighty Point, as I imagine, need it*.

But

* Perhaps an Argument may be drawn from the following Considerations, which may be less exceptionable, if not more plainly satisfactory; viz. That as all the Works and Ways of God are undeniably *perfect* in their Kinds, we may from hence strongly conclude; that every Species of Creatures, wherever found, were designed to obtain the *Completion* of their Being; and also of the Happiness they were rendered capable of. The animal Creation in *this* World appear to be thus indulged. But *Man*, tho' the highest Order by far, is extremely short of it in *both* Respects, whilst remaining in *this* Life. *He* neither obtains the Perfection of his Being, and much less, of the *rational* Happiness principally intended for him.

With respect to his *Being*, he is manifestly imperfect: for his *rational* Faculties, in which it chiefly consists, are so limited and cloudy, that he is not capable of attaining, by the farthest Improvement of them, such Knowledge and Wisdom as he ardently desires, and which seems even *needful* to the right Enjoyment of his *present* State. And, as this Desire is inseparable from the Reason with which he is endowed, we cannot think it was implanted to vex him with Disappointment; but may rather conclude,

But how (it may be said) can this grand Difficulty be cleared up to Satisfaction, by any Arguments or Considerations that have respect alone to the *present* State? — In attempt-

clude, it was intended to be fulfilled in the proper Season, in order to his full Attainment both of Being and Happiness. Wherefore, if our Case be only *thus* considered; it seems sufficiently evident, even in *this* View, that God designed Mankind for a more perfect State than is in *this* World attainable: and doubtless we are *here* placed at present, as being requisite, if not necessary, to dispose and qualify us, to obtain and enjoy the other.

And the Matter will appear almost to a Demonstration, if we farther more particularly examine it in respect to our *Happiness*. For, as *this* principally consists in *rational* Entertainments, and intellectual Pleasures; the highest and best Portion we can attain of *these*, is so far from proving satisfactory, that it rather renders our Lives the more uneasy, by means of its Defectiveness; and by *enlarging* also our Desires of obtaining greater Measures of them: to which it may be added; that this slender Portion of our principal Pleasures, is very often interrupted and diminished by a Variety of Disquietudes not to be avoided. These, and many other the like unhappy Circumstances, so strongly affect the worthiest Part of our Species, that, were it not for their Submission to the Divine Will, and a Desire to promote their fellow Mortals Comfort, they would rather dislodge from this World of Vanity, than continue still confined to it.

In this *obvious* View of Things, it seems *exceeding evident*; that the whole Existence of Man, cannot be supposed to end with his short Duration in *this* World. He would in such Case, be permitted to

attempting a Reply to this important Question, I think it adviseable to premise some other Considerations, additional to those already mentioned, with a particular View to our *own Species*; that I may lay, yet farther, as firm a Foundation as I can, to support the Argument I have undertaken.

enjoy but a *poor Pittance* of what appears to be his *principal Good*; but a *very slender Portion* of it, by no means adequate to the Capacities and Desires inserted in his Being. And as he is exposed to a greater Train of Evils than the *animal Creation* is, he would hereupon be found in a much less eligible State than they are. But how is it possible, for a *considerate Person* to persuade himself, that the only Rank of rational Creatures in this World, is the *least favoured*? that the great Creator of all, whose Perfections are consummate, and whose consequent Rectitude in *every Appointment*, must be concluded unexceptionable, should place the highest Order of earthly Beings in the least desirable Circumstances? there can scarce enter into our Minds a wilder Surmise than this. Wherefore we may plainly and *positively* infer, from the *manifest State* of Mankind in *this Life*; that we neither arrive, nor are *capable* of arriving whilst *here*, to our proper Perfection, either in *Happiness*, or in Being; and consequently, must *necessarily* be supposed, to have been formed and designed for some future Existence *chiefly*, when both will be truly perfected in all who approve themselves proper Objects of it.

C H A P. IV.

“ Containing some general Posi-
 “ tions, which respect more di-
 “ rectly the Case of *Mankind*
 “ in their *present* State of Being.”

THAT God may be considered as the common *Parent* more especially of *Mankind*, is what no reasonable Person can be supposed to deny. The *Scripture* assures us, that in him we *live*, and *move*; as well as it was from him, that we obtained at first our Being. And the Light of Nature hath dictated even to *Heathens*, the very same Things. Since God may therefore be considered, in an *especial* Manner, as the common Parent of *Mankind*, every Individual Person seems to have Reason to hope for a similar Portion of his parental Favour, so long as he may not have forfeited it: and a perfectly unbiaſſed Parent, who is compleatly endowed with every conceivable Excellency, cannot but be supposed to answer such Expectation, so far as he finds it to have a real Ground; and so far as may be consistent with the general Good of our Species, and with the State of Things respecting them.

Now, all that can with Reason be desired from God as under this Relation, is,
 “ To form, and place Men in such Circumstances, as may render them *capable*
 “ of being alike happy ; that is, of enjoying their *present* Being, in View of a
 “ *future* Life, (which should constantly be kept in Sight) altogether as desirably *,
 “ the one as the other ; provided they improve aright their respective Talents and
 “ Opportunities.”

That this is really the Case, if we take in the *whole Compass* of their Being, (viz. their *future* as well as *present* State) is an undoubted Truth, which every one who is *persuaded* of a future Existence, doth readily assent to. Nor would it otherwise be possible, according to the *general* Sentiment, to clear our common Parent from a Charge of most unreasonable, and even astonishing Partiality.

* I understand the Word, *desirably*, with a View to Mens future eternal State of Being, as well as what respects their short Abode in *this* Life. For nothing can be admitted to be truly *desirable*, that is any way inconsistent with our *eternal* Interest. And therefore every Thing that affects Men, under any Consideration, ought certainly to be regarded with a special View to *these*. This must be owned to be the *principal* Standard whereby to form a Judgment of it.

But,

But, since the *Goodness* of God, in particular towards *Men*, is the strongest Consideration that can be set before us, to work in every one the Regard we owe him; and thereby to secure our own Happiness; I shall endeavour to represent this *endearing* Attribute in a much more affecting Light, than the forementioned Acknowledgment appears to set it forth; in order to its having the more successful Influence on Mens Hearts and Lives.

To make way therefore for the Illustration of this, I desire it may be remembered, and carefully attended to,

FIRST, “ That the present Argument
 “ hath respect only to such Circumstances
 “ in Life as are properly *providential*: that
 “ is, as may truly be ascribed to a *divine*
 “ *Allotment* to the particular Persons concerned.”

For, whenever Men alter their respective Circumstances, (as is very commonly done) either by a wise Improvement of their Privileges and Talents; or otherwise, by perverting or neglecting them, thro’ Pride or Folly; whatever Effects are thus produced, are manifestly the Fruits of their own Conduct. Such additional Comfort,
 on

on the one Hand, as is thus attained, is the natural Return of their virtuous and good Behaviour: and, on the other; the Sufferings and Sorrows Men bring upon themselves, ought not to be imputed to a *providential* Allotment.

Now, 'tis very evident, that the greatest Part by far of Mens Pleasures and Pains, may properly be ascribed to their own Management: yea, there is some Ground to conclude; that the Joys and Sorrows of the present Life, almost *wholly* depend, *under God*, on the Temper of our Minds, and our manner of behaving, in the several Stations, Conditions, and Circumstances, which Providence may have assigned us. For God, having endowed us with rational Capacities, leaves it generally to ourselves to chuse and pursue our respective Measures: and *these* naturally terminate in the Good or Evil that corresponds with our Being. Wherefore did Men carefully on every Occasion, examine, and then pursue the unbiaſſed Dictates of their Minds; and afterwards, *steadily* practise the Means within their Power; they would soon find, that such a *rational* Conduct would not only prevent, or *mitigate* the Evils they are liable to; but greatly increase, and heighten, whatever Comforts were attainable.

Indeed,

Indeed, in the present State of Things, it seems to be impossible but that the Portions of some, in what are esteemed the *Comforts* of Life, must be very different from what others of their fellow Creatures are put in Possession of. And also, that the *apprehended Evils* which Mankind are liable to, should fall more to the Lot of some, than of others:—In the present State of Things, I say, it became *unavoidable*. For otherwise, the Earth we live upon, must have been differently formed; and the Manner of propagating our Species must also have been different from what is now prescribed: yea, natural Causes could not have been productive of their several Effects, as they are at present settled, and have any respect to Men:—In *all* these respects, and in a great many other, must the GRAND CONTRIVANCE have been *very much* altered; had it been possible for Men to have been all alike *externally* treated, with regard to their Abodes, or Stations, or Circumstances in Life. But no Person of Understanding could expect, or *desire* this, if pleased, or but satisfied, with his present State of Being: for then he would desire to be a different Creature from what he now is; and also to be placed in a different World. Whereas, the World we live in, and *all* the Appointments relating to it, are undoubtedly directed

directed to the best Advantage *every* way : otherwise, infinite Wisdom and boundless Goodness would have strangely erred in what hath respect to this *earthly* System : and why not then, even in every other throughout the Universe ? but this surely is too wild a Conceit for any one in his Senses to be supposed to entertain.

From hence then we may conclude : that, as different Abodes, different Stations, and different Circumstances, are unavoidable to Men in the present State ; from whence must *necessarily* result a Variety of Cases, with respect to *apprehended* Good and Evil ; there can be little Reason to ascribe the eventual Consequences of this unerring Appointment, of whatever Kind they are, to a providential *personal* Direction of Matters. For, tho' some are subjected to various Sufferings through the natural Course of Things as thus appointed ; their Case however may be considered, only as an incidental *seeming* Infelicity which Mankind in *general* are liable to ; and not as an Assignment intended for *them*, any more than for others, *unless deserving it*. The actual Sufferers cannot be supposed, to be marked out and destined to the Lots that fall to them, thro' any groundless Partiality,

tiality, or causeless want of Favour : for this would impeach the divine Rectitude.

Indeed, such Portions of Evil as Men have no Power to prevent or remedy, may be ascribed in *general*, to the Directions of Providence ; but not as being directed with a particular Eye to those that suffer, unless (as I said) *deserving* it.—And, with respect to Evils that are *thus* occasioned, God hath so skilfully and most indulgently ordered Matters, as to make way for the eventual turning even of *these* to great Advantage, when *wisely improved* : so that the *chastised* Offender, if not wanting to himself, may render them in the Issue a *beneficial Good*. But, when any Persons faultily neglect their Talents and Opportunities ; and especially when they pervert, or misimprove their Powers ; and hereby, either bring upon themselves, or senselessly continue, such Evils or Afflictions as they might have avoided ;——with what Reason, can such Sufferings as *these* be at all charged to a *divine* Direction of Things ? Must Providence be censured for the pure Effects of Mens own Faultiness ? will they ascribe to *God*, what belongeth to *themselves* ? and then murmur and complain, as if unkindly dealt with ? or not so kindly as some are apprehended to be who have acted a wiser Part ?

Part? can any Persons expect more from God, than to give them *Abilities* to prevent, or remove, or at least to *mitigate*, the Evils they are liable to? and ought they not, in all Reason, to exercise and improve them to as good Advantage as they can? would they be eased under Sufferings, and yet not endeavour it, when the means of such Ease are within their Power? how senseless and inexcusable, in all such Cases, is their impotent Desire? and, how extremely faulty are their following Complaints?

Let *no one* therefore attribute to God a Want of parental Favour to him, in any Case of Suffering, or yet in those *Degrees* of Evil, which ought wholly to be imputed to his own Folly, or Negligence, if not to groffer Faultiness.

I conclude therefore, on the whole; that there are no other Afflictions in Life properly providential, but such as *unavoidably* result from natural Causes of God's *Appointment*: not those that are the Effects of Mens own Faultiness, in whatever natural Course they may proceed from *this*:— And those only among the former, or those several *Portions* of such, as are not to be prevented, or remedied, by a proper Exercise

ercise of the several Powers wherewith they are endowed. And, I apprehend it undeniable ; “ That the Evils in which Providence is *really* concerned, are *very few* “ comparatively : and, that *these* when unavoidable are admitted as being serviceable to some *preponderating Good* ; so far as in Reality, to be upon the whole, a *valuable Good themselves*, and deserve to be thus accounted.” And, as *this* Consideration is of so great Importance in my present Argument, I think it advisable, altho’ I have been led to take Notice of it already, to evince it yet farther as was then proposed. Accordingly, I observe,

SECONDLY, “ That *consummate Wisdom* “ cannot possibly be the Occasion of *pure Evil* : I mean, of *unmerited* Suffering “ that is not outweighed, some way, by a “ greater proposed *Good*.”

Good alone can be its proper Object *. Nor can we conceive of any thing else which may afford it Entertainment. *Pure Evil*, may indeed gratify some base and ungenerous Principles ; but *such* Principles cannot possibly influence, on whatever Occasion, the SUPREME BEING. *Malice,*

* Origin of Evil, p. 46.

Hatred,

Hatred, Revenge, &c. may monstrously feed on another's Sufferings: but all such distorted Dispositions are perfectly *abhorrent* to the God of *Goodness*; being, as opposite as is *possible*, to that *Benevolence*, and *Tenderness*, *Placability*, and *Mercifulness*, which are necessarily inherent in him.

Nor can any *Bias* take hold on God: or any Motive, of whatever kind, but what perfectly corresponds with *all* his Perfections both primary and subordinate. *Self-Will*, or mere *Pleasure*, or over-bearing *Sovereignty*, can have no Influence on this AUGUST BEING, who is necessarily guided in all his Measures, by *Reason*, *Benevolence*, *unbiassed Equity*, and *Truth*; whose Perfection engageth him to direct his Proceedings, not only in an unexceptionable, but in the most *laudable* and *exact* Manner that the Nature of Things admit.

Partiality therefore in Favour, is not to be supposed of God; and much less any causeless or undeserved Dislike: and least of all, the inflicting any *unmerited* Suffering, unless it may be improved to some consequent over-ballancing Good.

Indeed, Distinctions in the Creatures, which are of numberless Ranks; and, in those

those various Powers and Capacities for Happiness wherewith they are endowed, may be thought to conclude strongly against what I have advanced, with respect to conferring *Favours* : but I conceive of those Distinctions, as being a *glorious Display* of creative Management : not, as any Discovery of *real* unequal Kindness. The Perfections of God could not have been as plainly manifested by a single Species, how complete soever* ; as by various Ranks and Orders of Creatures, *most beautifully rising* from the lowest Degree of Life, to the highest Climax of communicated Being. This, 'tis true, hath necessarily occasioned an *appearing* Difference in Favour, by implanting different Powers, or different Capacities for Happiness, in the several Species that are formed. But this doth not *in Reality* discover (as is above suggested) such unequal Kindness to some, as can lay a Foundation for the least Complaint ; since every Rank hath a full Provision made for the complete Enjoyment of their respective Beings. Nor is any inferior Species under any *real* Disadvantage, on account of the Superiority of any other. The *rational* Orders cannot but be pleased, if guided by their

* See Orig. &c. p. 29; 30.

Reason, in the respective Ranks assigned them: and have rather Cause to *rejoice*, than *repine*, at the Advantages of Superiors; because they are instrumental to the Advancement of their own Felicity. No doubt, they were *partly* if not *principally*, thus designed: and they are actually this way exercised, when the several Orders make a right Improvement of the beneficent Powers conferred on them.

And, if this be really the Case, in respect to the *rational* Creation, as there seems sufficient Reason to conclude it is; what room can there then be, to urge those *Distinctions* as any sort of Objection against the Argument I have advanced; when those very Distinctions rather tend to *strengthen*, than in the least to invalidate it? for, in this View, the *amazing* Direction of creative Power and Goodness, appears the more conspicuous: since each Rank hath (as was observed) an *Increase* of Happiness by it. “ ’Tis indeed a STUPENDOUS Method of enlarging Favour to all.” The lower Orders are great Gainers, thro’ the Kindnesses and good Services they receive from those above them; whose principal Powers were designedly fitted for such beneficent Acts: and the *higher* Ranks advance in like manner their own Felicity, by

by the kind Offices they do to Inferiors ;
 “ Which probably afford even the *principal* Part the *right* Enjoyment of their
 “ own Being.” That is, supposing them
 done, as they always are when rightly performed, in a chearful Obedience to the divine Will ;—a pleasurable Improvement of their proper Powers ; and in hearty good Will to their inferior fellow Creatures.

Thus may we suppose ;—I think, firmly conclude ; that Distinction among the Orders in the *rational* Creation, (which are those only this Objection can fasten upon) is so far from being an Evidence of *Partiality* in Favour, that it greatly contributes to an *Increase* of Favour, respecting *every* Species. And, “ What an AMAZING
 “ SCENE OF UNPARALLEL'D SKILL AND
 “ KINDNESS TO ALL, doth open to
 “ the Mind, in this memorable View of
 “ creative Management !”—The Distinctions respecting *Men*, will be considered hereafter.

As this specious Objection is thus fairly I think obviated ; I shall take Leave to conclude still ; that neither unmeet Favour, and much less, undeserved Suffering, can be the Lot of any among the *human* Species, thro' any *providential* Direction of Matters.

The one may be shewn, and the other inflicted by their fellow Mortals ; but neither of them, not the *latter especially*, can be imputed to God.

Should any one desire to have this *grand* Point yet farther illustrated ; I would add to the preceding Observations, and to what was before suggested ; That *consummate* Wisdom especially, is necessarily influenced by some *valuable End*, sufficient to direct it in all its Measures. It would otherwise indeed degenerate into Weakness and Indiscretion, or some wrong Management : all which would be a perfect Contradiction to its own Nature, and its proper Effects.

“ A *valuable End*, can be nothing else
 “ but the obtaining, or promoting some real
 “ Good, sufficient to justify the Methods
 “ taken for it.” *Apprehended* Evil, may
 some times be necessary, or otherwise chosen, as the means that lead to it ; but this, as I conceive, doth not in reality affect my Argument : for whatever is properly instrumental to the obtaining a *valuable Good*, is hereupon (as hath been proved) *itself a Good*, if the Purchase over-balance the Pain or Trouble it may cost the Agent. On the other Hand, a *real Evil*, or what is *Evil on the whole*, is so far from being a
 proper

proper End, becoming a rational Agent, that 'tis (if I may so express it) worse than no End. All *rational* Acts, suppose an *apprehended* eligible *Good* as their real Motive: and when various Ends, or different Objects of Election, present themselves to the Mind, there is then a *Preference* given, for the Time, to that which is fixed on, —to that which produceth the Act, or Acts, which lead to it. In *human* Agency, the Event doth often shew, that the Choice was wrongly made, or the Preference foolishly given. *Evil*, is often the actual Result of what is chosen and pursued. But this was occasioned by the Agent's Weakness and Mistake. He centered not in this; nor was it possible he should. The Thing he aimed at, was, what he imagined for the Time, a valuable *Good*, or, a Good that would outweigh whatever Pain it might cost him: otherwise he would not have preferred and chosen it as the Motive of his Conduct.

This, as I conceive, is a just Account of the *rational* Agency of even the most imperfect rational Being. So that, even *this* will not admit of any other Proposal, or, any other Motive of acting, than an *apprehended Good*.

And must we not therefore conclude the same of *divine* Agency? and conclude more strongly? yea, *firmly rest* upon it, when speaking, or conceiving, of the proper Effects of *divine* Wisdom? *This* is incapable of being led into Mistake;—of apprehending, or acting, wrongly, in any *one* Matter, “ Good, most certainly then, can be the “ only Object of all God’s Proposals, and “ of all his Directions, in *all* Cases.” *His consummate* Wisdom, and consequent most perfect Goodness, seem to render it even *absolutely necessary*. The very *Nature* of rational Agency, and especially of the most perfect, may lead us to this Conclusion; and so likewise may our Conceptions of *divine Felicity*.

I therefore repeat it yet once more, “ That *consummate* Wisdom cannot be the “ Occasion of *pure* Evil in any of its Directions, or in any Dispensations towards “ *any* Creature. Nothing but *Good*, immediate or consequential, in one respect or “ other, can be its real Motive, either in “ creative or providential Conduct.

And, if this Conclusion is rightly grounded, as I take it to be; it must be owned, I conceive, to be as strong an Evidence

dence of my main Point as can reasonably be desired.

But, as there are manifold Evils, undeniably *providential*, that a great many Persons undergo, which are (as 'tis thought) no way compensated in the *present* State; viz. Those that are the Consequence of *Birth*: and many other which are wholly owing to *accidental* Occurrences: and, as the *former* especially are certainly unmerited; and the other promiscuously fall on the Virtuous and the Vile, without the least appearing Distinction: and as these Things may be imagined a strong Objection against what I am pleading for; it may be proper to observe,

THIRDLY, “ That all apprehended
“ Evils which are *really* providential, as being the Consequence of the present Constitution of Things, can by no means
“ admit of any Sort of Censure, but what
“ will strongly affect both the Prudence
“ and Rectitude of the grand Contriver of
“ them.”

But nothing certainly can be more evident than this: that perfect Wisdom cannot possibly err in any of its Directions: nor, that consummate Goodness, and unbiaſſed

Equity, can be charged with *Partiality* in any divine Appointment. Wherefore we must conclude, however Matters appear, that *every* Thing is directed to as great Advantage, *every* Way, as the Case of the World in general, and of Men in particular, would properly admit: yea, it is manifest, even to *our* imperfect cloudy Understandings, that *Multitudes* are vastly benefitted, by the admirable Direction of the present System, to *one* who is thought a Sufferer by it. Had Matters been otherwise directed, if *capable* of any other *wise* Direction, according to the best Judgment that *we* can form of those Things, a great Variety of most valuable Privileges and Benefits, which are plainly the Result of the present Constitution, would not have been enjoyed, as they now are, by abundantly the greater Part of Mankind. — Of what great and universal Service (*e. g.*) are the *Winds*, and the *Seas*? and yet how often do they prove destructive to the Lives and Concerns of many? how needful also and beneficial are the Effects of Fire? and yet what dreadful Havock doth it sometimes make, thro' seeming accidental Causes? or, by Means that were not avoidable? the like may be observed in a great many other Instances.

What

What Cause of Wonder can it therefore be? what Ground especially of Complaint? that divine Wisdom, which always necessarily aims at the most extended Good, should direct and establish Things in the Manner they are found; altho' this Appointment doth sometimes prove the Occasion of unavoidable Suffering to some few Persons, who are not after all permitted to be *real* Losers by them, unless thro' Faultiness deserving it.

But perhaps it may be here objected:
 " That altho' the general Course of Things
 " might not fitly be altered, to prevent
 " always the Maladies and Sufferings resulting from it; yet, at certain Times,
 " for the Sake of particular Persons who
 " are proper Objects, a divine Interposer
 " might be hoped for, whereby the Preservation of such *deserving* Persons might
 " be affected."

In reply to all Surmises of this Nature, I would observe, *First*, " That the Distinction of Characters, and especially of
 " *Deserts*, in the Case I am considering, is
 " very rarely to be plainly perceived, even
 " by those who have the fittest Talents
 " and the fairest Opportunities for it."

External

External Acts, and their inward Motives, are very often exceeding distant, and also different from each other. Now, the proper Character of every one, is chiefly to be taken from his *inward* Spring of acting: for, 'tis the Influence of the *Mind*, on every *voluntary* Action, from whence the Merit, or Demerit of it, is properly derived. Wherefore, the Actions themselves, in whatever View they may appear, can be only rightly judged of in respect to the Agent, by giving a proper Weight to the Aims and Motives upon which he *really* acted. But *who* can take upon him to be perfectly acquainted with these? even a *general* and a *continued* Course of Behaviour, is not always to be depended on, in forming our Sentiments, and in assigning a Character, scarcely of any *one* Person. Unless, therefore, we could perfectly discern his Motives of acting, and all the *Circumstances* attending those Motives, we cannot judge infallibly of *any* Person's Deserts; nor should presume to be positive in judging. False Aims and faulty Principles, have been sometimes *found*, to have been the Spring of a long Series of *seeming* commendable Conduct.

In like manner, to determine rightly on a *faulty* Character; yea, to judge *certainly* of
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of the vilest Actions that are most apparent ; we have need to be well acquainted with the strong Incidents of natural Appetite in the Person concerned ;—with the Hurry of his Passions ;—the Force of Ensnarements on him ;—and with the Manner too of his *Education*, on which Mens Sentiments, and Apprehensions of Matters, mightily depend ;—and with several other Circumstances :—We have need, I say, to be well acquainted with each of these Things : and to weigh them severally with due Care, and with great Impartiality ; or we cannot take upon us to be adequate Judges of even the most flagrant vitious Action, however manifestly it may appear.

Further : supposing we were perfectly acquainted, even with every Thing needful to form a true Notion, both of the Nature, and Circumstances, of a vile Act ; and hereupon, of the real Demerit of the Person who committed it : yet, unless we as perfectly knew, in what manner he was affected *after* the Commission :—whether it might presently melt him in hearty Reluctance, and deep Compunction ; or, in what *Degree* he was thus affected :—or otherwise might be hardened in a Want of Shame, and in sottish Impenitency, —unless, I say, we were as perfectly acquainted with

with *these* consequent Circumstances, as with those preceding;—how can we take upon us to judge decisively, of even the *most notorious* appearing criminal Action? so far I mean, as to determine; whether the Agent might be a proper Object, or not, of divine Protection from an Evil, which may fall perhaps on others of seeming more worthy Characters?—when we therefore presume, to determine positively in any such Cases, we judge rashly and at random, (as will presently be further shewn) in like manner as we generally do, in almost all the Matters wherein *Providence* is concerned.—How can we *possibly* know, who are the real Objects of *any* apprehended Favour from God, as to external Matters especially? or *what is really a Favour?*

And, let it also be considered, in Consequence of what hath been before proved.

SECONDLY, “ That, to permit Suffering; yea, directly to *inflict* it; is certainly a Favour, when it turns *beneficially*; or, to a Good outweighing the Pain that is endured.”

And all Sufferings that affect considerably;—perhaps, *every Degree* of Suffering,

ing, may be thus eventually advantageous to all but the Abandoned, or those besotted in evil Courses. Nor need we take in, to make this Conclusion, a *future* State of Being; (altho' the Prospect of this ought always to be attended to, as our principal Concern; but waving this at present;) with respect only to the *present* Life, it may many ways be beneficial; and doubtless *always* is so to the wise and well-disposed. *Considerable* Suffering, is very often *remarkably* beneficial. *This naturally* works the Mind into Sedateness and Thoughtfulness: it likewise prevents, or lessens, the Hurry of Passions; — the Violence of Appetites; — the Prevalence of Sense; — and hereby clears the way for the Light and Government of Reason.

Perfect Ease and Tranquility, as they are not attainable, so not *desirable*, in our present imperfect State. “ Even the *wisest*
 “ Man hath not Ballast sufficient to carry
 “ such lofty Sails, thro' the sweeping Current of natural strong Propensities; and
 “ under those violent Gales of various alluring Pleasures to which he is daily
 “ exposed.” Were we always Strangers to Pain, and in the full Enjoyment of what did delight us: Sense and Appetite might engross us wholly. We should soon forget
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we were *rational* Creatures ; and, that our proper Entertainments result from behaving *wisely*.

The *grand Contriver* of our Being seems therefore to have been obliged, having made us *imperfect* Rationals, and placed us where we are ;—seems, I say, to have been *obliged*, from wise and *indulgent* Motives, to leave Room for a Scourge of Suffering, to be various Ways inflicted ; that we might hereby be the sooner reclaimed from those wrong Courses we are so prone to take ; and be driven back, when needed, into the Path of Wisdom, wherein alone our Happiness can be found.

Accidental Evils, among other, were partly no doubt permitted, if not designed, with this kind View, in the appointed Course of Things ; and they manifestly have an advantageous Tendency a great many ways. Should therefore a virtuous and good Man unhappily fall into any Suffering, which an appearing notorious Sinner, perhaps in Company, and equally exposed, may chance to escape ; shall we take upon us to conclude from this, an *Inequality in such Treatment* ? — a Want of Kindness to the former, and an Overplus to the latter ? — might not the First,
at

at that Time, be no Object of distinguishing Favour? or, might it not be *desirable* for him, on some Account or other, to be then a Sufferer? and might not the Deliverance which the seeming unworthy Person obtained, supposing it owing to a providential over-ruling of Matters, be a proper Return, at that Time seasonable, for something before commendable in him? or otherwise be the Effect of an accidental Escape, (if it be *thus* supposed) wherein a divine Providence was not *immediately* concerned? Who can take upon him to determine those Matters? or in any *Degree* to be a proper Judge of 'em.

There can therefore be no Ground to fasten the lowest Charge on Providence, from *incidental* Occurrences, any more than from any other, whatever may be the Event of 'em to any particular Persons. Of *this* we may rest assured;—That if God concerns himself about any Affairs of *this* World; (and that he does, appears to me a self-evident Truth) 'tis even *impossible* he should direct them in the lowest Degree unequally; I mean, so as to give Room for the least Censure, or real Blame; or so as to discover the least Kindness to one, or any Want of it to another, without a sufficient Reason. For, such is the *perfect*
Rectitude

Rectitude of divine Conduct, we may certainly conclude, God always shews an *exact* Distinction in his Favours, according to the *Meetness* of those on whom he confers them: and therefore the Virtuous and *truly* Pious may depend on their obtaining, in *all* Cases, all that Indulgence they can reasonably desire. But, as it lies out of human Reach to judge of *these* Things, every Part of the Procedure must be left to *his* Direction. And therefore, to prevent, or abate, the Presumption of those who are apt to pronounce rashly on the Ways of Providence, I shall pursue a little farther what was just before suggested. Accordingly I observe,

THIRDLY, " That, so various, and very
 " different, are the Dispositions of Men,
 " and their consequent Apprehensions of
 " Good and Evil; *no* one can be an
 " adequate Judge of another's affecting
 " Circumstances, in whatever manner they
 " may appear."

For, whatever may be the Source, or Occasion, perhaps of *exquisite* Delight to some; others, who may be thought to be as happily situated, may either wholly disregard, or be but *little* entertained with, if it affords them any Pleasure at all. In like manner,

manner, the very same Case of Affliction, which may load some with a Weight of Grief almost insupportable ; others, may so bravely surmount, or so stupidly disregard, as to be very little affected with.—*Further* : the bare Continuance of either Case, wears off gradually the first Impressions of it. Whereupon, the most acute Pains, and especially transient Pleasures, do manifestly lose their respective Influence, by a long Endurance of the first, and the like Enjoyment of the latter.—'Tis far therefore, from being easy, to judge rightly of *any* Person's Portion of either Happiness, or Woe, in whatever State we apprehend him. His external Circumstances may be very apparent ; but neither can the Manner, and much less the Degrees in which he may be affected, be known any other way, than by his own Information ; nor can this be perfectly relied on.—*Who* then can take upon him to determine the present Question ? To conclude indeed *positively* concerning the Inequality of human Allotments, unless in Cases exceeding obvious, appears to me a very rash and presumptive Act, which no one of *solid* Judgment will allow himself in doing. Men have need to be well acquainted (as was before observed) even with *every* Circumstance attending such Case, or they will judge at random. And *who* is

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there that is so well informed? How little do we know, or how little attend unto, the *Alloys* that are mixed with our *own* Circumstances? There are most certainly a great many such, which are always interwoven with every Condition, whether prosperous or afflictive. Both Pleasure and Pain, in the present State, are *this* way varied, and full of Intermixture.

Besides, both one and the other, have many times considerable Intermissions, when the opposite Cases *uncommonly* affect. An Interval of Ease is extremely delightful, to one who hath long endured an acute Pain: and a few Moments of Affliction, whether real, or imaginary, pierce deep into a Spirit that was wont to be immersed in Pleasure. *This* way also are the Lives of all Men not a little varied: which further renders it the more difficult, to judge upon the whole, of their real State:—I say, upon the *whole*: for the Allotment of any one, cannot be rightly judged of, by what may appear at a particular Time, or in a single Case; but, by considering his Circumstances thro' the *whole* of Life. For the Balance may set right, when the *Sum total* respecting particular Persons, is put into the Scale, on one Side and the other; altho' at Times, or on certain Occasions, it may

may be very unequal. The *whole* of Life, I say, must be carefully examined, and duly considered, (if any one can pretend to a Capacity of doing this; and, to have also had an Opportunity needful for it;) or, there can be no room to pass a rational Judgment between Man and Man, whatever Circumstances they may appear to be in.

I have thus endeavoured to make way for the clearing up my main Point, by the general Considerations above mentioned, which more directly respect the Case of *Mankind*.—But, as all that hath been remarked in this *general* Manner, may be thought to come *very short* of what was at first proposed; and also to contradict, in a great Variety of Instances, undeniable Matters of Fact, the grand Objection may still strongly be urged:—“That no one,
 “ who considers with the least Attention,
 “ the case of Mankind in the present Life,
 “ can possibly persuade himself, after all
 “ I have as yet offered; that the Allotments
 “ of Providence to particular Persons, are
 “ not *strangely unequal* even in every View:
 “ and particularly, in respect to their different *Abodes*:—their different *Ranks*
 “ and *Stations*, in civilized Countries especially:—their *amazingly* various Cir-

“ circumstances, in *intellectual Capacities* :
 “ *bodily Advantages* : and *external Goods* :
 “ all which are Instances so obvious and
 “ undeniable ; and very often so evidently
 “ resulting from a divine Direction of
 “ Things ; that they are absolutely unac-
 “ countable ; unless we have recourse to a
 “ future State of Being ; wherein all may
 “ be perfectly righted, and set on a proper
 “ Equipoise.”

So strongly may this grand Objection be
 still urged : and doubtless is thought by
 many, to be absolutely unsurmountable.
 Nor can it be denied, that the Difficulties
 which arise in those several Views, are very
 far from being easily accounted for ; so far
 at least, as to give proper Satisfaction to
 those who are strongly settled in the above-
 mentioned Sentiments.—I shall however
 attempt it ; and hope to suggest something
 that may be serviceable hereunto ; which
 such as are better qualified may improve to
 greater Advantage, if inclined to prosecute
 this very important Subject.—I shall begin
 with the *first* mentioned ; and shall endea-
 vour to give it the Attention it deserves.

C H A P. V.

“ The Case of Mankind con-
 “ sidered, with respect to their
 “ *Abodes*, in those different Re-
 “ gions which *Providence* may
 “ have assigned them.”

I T must be acknowledged, that one of the most material Circumstances which concur in promoting our present Happiness, is, a desirable *Habitation* with respect to *Climate*; and the Comfort and Advantages consequent on this. Now, 'tis evident and undeniable, that the Case of Mankind in *this* Respect, is as widely different, as in any other observable Instance. For some (as was occasionally mentioned before) are born and brought up, as in the *Paradise of God*; where all Things richly abound to gratify every Appetite, and to fill up every Desire.——Whereas, others are destined to Wastes and Desarts, where the bare *Necessaries* of Life are sometimes hardly to be obtained, by all the Care, Assiduity, and Labour, they are capable of exerting. And as *this* seems to discover an amazing Inequality in providential Allotments, how can we reconcile this ob-

vious Case to a similar parental Kindness to Men?

In reply to this; let it here be considered, *First*: That as the Earth on which we live, is most admirably formed to be a proper Residence for every Creature intended to inhabit it; and especially for *Mankind*: and, as it will not admit (even in *human* Judgment) a more advantageous Form, Direction, and Provision, to answer every proposed End*: and yet, vastly dif-

* Whoever acknowledgeth this Earthly System to have been the Contrivance of unerring Wisdom, and completed and established by an omnipotent Hand; must surely conclude, that the Work of *such* an Artist, is, in every Part, as *perfect*, as the Design and Nature of it, in Conjunction with such other Systems as doubtless it hath Relation to, would properly admit. A *Part* of any Workmanship ought not to be considered separately, or alone; but in Connection with the Whole, and every other Part; or no Judgment can be rightly formed of its Make, or Usefulness. Now, there seems Reason to believe, that the whole *Universe* is but one STUPENDOUS MACHINE, made up of numberless Parts; every one of which is so astonishingly contrived, as to have, in some respect or other, either an immediate, or more remote Relation to innumerable others! —What stupid Conceit! What wild Arrogance! would it therefore betray, in such *Mites* of Creatures as *we* are, should we dare to arraign and censure the Divine Management in any *one* Instance?

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ferent Climates, necessarily resulting from its present Form, and from the animating Influence of that *grand Luminary*, (the SUN) on which all its Products, and all its Inhabitants, so very much depend: as those necessarily different Climates; I say, do render the Abodes of Men unavoidably different; there seems, on the whole, an *absolute Necessity*, that the Case of Mankind in respect to *Situation*, and the consequent *external* Comforts, or Disadvantages of Life, should be, in Proportion, widely indeed different: but what is necessary in Nature, or could not properly be altered consistent with the other Systems in the Universe, to which the Earth hath undoubtedly some Relation, ought certainly to be submitted to without Reluctance, by those who may be thought to suffer by it: nor can there, in such Case, be the least Cause to complain, unless such Sufferers have Ground to suspect, 'twas a want of Kindness, and not an unavoidable Event, that they were thus stationed.

But, should this general Consideration be thought of little Weight, I further observe,

SECONDLY, “ That those who have
“ been worst situated, in the Opinion of
G 4 “ others,

“ others, have, in their own Apprehension,
 “ on one Account or another, been placed
 “ as agreeably as any of their fellow Men:
 “ yea, have *preferred* their native Country
 “ to every other foreign Abode they have
 “ been informed of.”

Mens own Opinion, in Matters respecting themselves, is the only Measure whereby to judge of their *personal* Felicity, or, of what is most agreeable to them. Now, so wonderful a Bias hath the grand Contriver fixed in our natural Dispositions; and so strong an Influence have the Objects and Entertainments we have been from Childhood accustomed to, that Mens Fondness for their native Country hath rarely if ever been extinguished in People of *virtuous* Characters. The Enchantment of *this*; the Endearment of Relations, and the Entertainments of Friends, Acquaintance, &c. do work so strongly on most, that generally, they even *dread* a Remove to a distant Country, however comfortless their own may appear to *Foreigners* to be. And this, as I conceive, is a very considerable Evidence, that in their *own* Apprehension, their native Abode is the best that could be chosen for them. And doubtless this strong Influence was partly intended, to reconcile the Inhabitants of the least agreeable Climates,

mates, to the Abodes that Providence may have assigned them. But, whatever have been the Effects of this natural Propensity, or, to whatever Cause it may be owing, it hath manifestly appeared among all Nations; and especially among those who have been most civilized. The *Profligate*, and the *Insatiable*, have often indeed shewn but a low Degree of this natural Virtue; and have hereupon hankered after foreign Abodes. But, could *those* have filled up their extravagant Desires in their native Country; they would never have forsaken it. It hath been even to *these*, a sort of Compulsion, which hath as it were *dragged* them to a foreign Climate. But, whatever may be in this, the Practice of *such* People cannot properly be objected against my present Argument; for the Providence of God can neither be supposed, nor *desired*, to have directed its Measures in compliance with Mens *Lusts*; but to promote and increase their *rational* Gratifications.

I will here add: and so most wonderful a Turn, hath our indulgent Parent given to this *vitious* Temper in the *Event* of Things; that it often works round to the increased Comfort of those who continue pleased in their proper Settlement. Their *native* Countries in particular; and many times

times their Neighbours and Friends, have hereby had a fuller Provision brought them of the desirable Enjoyments of Life. The like may be observed in Abundance of other Instances.—Thus is it, that even the *Follies* and *Vices* of the *faulty* Part of Mankind, eventually often prove of considerable Benefit to the rest. By this means the various Blessings provided for Mankind have been more extensively distributed. But I shall not enlarge on this; altho' it sets forth the *vast Reach* of the GRAND OVER-RULER of all Things, in an *highly astonishing*, as well as *engaging* View.—I observe further,

THIRDLY, “ That *disagreeable* Circumstances, of one kind and another, are every where observable, in every inhabited Country.”

Poverty, and Want, and the other ordinary Evils of Life, are not the Growth of a particular Soil; but shoot up plentifully in all Climates:—in the richest and best accommodated, as well as the most barren. If therefore these Occurrences do *any where* evidence such an uncomfortable Situation, as shews unequal Treatment of Men, they may in *all Places* be produced as the like Proof of it; which would run this way of arguing into a plain Absurdity as applied

applied to *Situation*.——And, let it also be considered ; that the Constitution of Natives, and their manner of Life, are admirably suited, by a wonderful Direction of Things, to the Nature of those Climates in which Providence may have placed them. Whereupon, the affecting Circumstances, of whatever kind, which their respective Situations may render unavoidable, are this way also considerably balanced. Their Natures and Desires are correspondent to their Abodes ; yea, they are so well adapted, as to make the Agreement *eligible*. I will here add : that Innocence, and Virtue, those most valuable Things in Nature, do generally flourish most in the most barren Soils ; and would doubtless thrive abundantly more than they now do, were it not for the Contagions unhappily brought into them from more fertile Countries. *Plenty* is the Parent of innumerable Vices. This pampers so much the Body, as to render the animal Part of Men abundantly more unruly in its Senses and Appetites, than it would otherwise be ; and hereupon proves the Occasion of such Extravagances and Follies as are the Bane of rational Happiness ; and the Ruin also of Innumerable. So that the Inhabitants of a *Goshen* appear in *this* View, less desirably situated, than those in the most blasting Climates.

But

But let it however be remembered ; that the delightful Situation of the most indulged *Goshenites*, supposing it an Infelicity as in *this* Light, hath in *other* Respects, Advantages sufficient (as is, I apprehend, the Case, in every other inhabited Part of the Earth) to render it *on the Whole*, no less desirable than any other appointed Settlement.

I might add some other Considerations in support of this Hypothesis : but, without farther Enlargement, shall take leave to conclude ; “ That whatever *real* Inequalities are found among Men, with respect “ to *Situation*, may be imputed to themselves,—to their Viciousness, or Folly ; “ but not to providential *personal* Assignment.”

Let us now examine the Matter farther, in regard also to Mens different *Stations* in Life.

C H A P. VI.

“ The Case of Mankind considered with respect to their different *Stations*.”

I N this *other* View it may appear, on a careful and unbiaſſed Examination, there is as little Ground to complain of unequal Allotments, as in the Instance above-mentioned. For, Men may as comfortably enjoy themselves, and to as great Advantage, *in the Prospect of a future Life*, (which ought always to be attended to) in the lower Ranks, as in the highest; provided they want not the *Necessaries* of Life, or any thing really needful to the ordinary Supports of Nature. And this, I am persuaded, is such a wretched Case as was never properly *Providential*, unless in a way of Punishment.

In Proof of what I have advanced, I observe, — “ *First* : That the placing Mankind in different Ranks, is an *admirable Direction*, which plainly appears, not only requisite, but *necessary*, for the common Benefit of all.”

’Tis

'Tis evidently needful in the important Article of *Government* : and also to obtain desirably even the common Supports of Life : and almost *all* the Conveniences of it. The High and Low, the Rich and Poor, do mutually depend on each other's Assistance, to promote and secure their common Welfare. The Earth indeed is richly stocked with all the Materials, requisite for those Ends ; but the drawing them forth ; and working them for use ; is wisely left to Mens own Management. And the Labours and Pains which the lower Ranks are subjected to, are partly recompensed by the *Premiums* they obtain from those in superior Stations who enjoy the Fruits of them : and, are further *greatly* rewarded in those happy Measures of Health and Agility, to which their Labours administer more than any other ordinary Means. And, in Consequence of this, they generally enjoy a more delighting State of Life than most of their Superiors. Their Spirits are hereby rendered sprightly and vigorous ; and frequently flow into a full Stream of enlarged Pleasantry. Their Senses also are truer, and their Tastes better prepared : and by this means they have generally a particular Advantage as to *animal* Gratifications, of every innocent kind.

Nor

Nor are their Entertainments allayed or sullied (as is common with those in superior Circumstances) with the Parchings of Ambition; the Pinings of Precedence; the Gratings of Envy; or the like most wretched Intermixtures. Their Superiors indeed may be thought more happy in the Ease and Plenty, which are *their* distinguished Privilege. *These* may indulge their Appetites and Senses in whatever they crave; having a full Provision even to glut, as well as gratify them. But the Blessing of *Health*, with its various delighting Fruits, in which they generally exceed them, is sufficient of itself, not only to set the Balance at rights, but to preponderate also considerably.

I would farther observe, *Secondly*, "That
 " there are but few among the higher
 " Ranks, who sufficiently guard against the
 " various Allurements to Vice and Folly,
 " which their affluent Circumstances do
 " every Day expose them: nor is it easy
 " to resist their Influence."

From whence it may be inferred; that their Pomp and Plenty, instead of procuring the Advantages of Life, may frequently bar them from most of the valuable Comforts of it. And, if we consider the future State in Conjunction with the
 present

present, there may, in *this important View*, be Ground to conclude, their Situation in Life is far less desirable than the Station of their *Inferiors*. Heights of Honour, and Affluence of Wealth, are, what the Minds of few may have Weight sufficient to *counter-balance*. Such is our Weakness, or usual Defects in Wisdom, that Men have rarely proper Strength successfully to oppose but the *common* Foes of Virtue: I mean the *ordinary* Ensnarements and Entanglements in Life: and much less to repel those numerous Troops of strongest Force which environ always the *Great*, and all in affluent Circumstances. *These* may therefore seem, on this *other* Account, to be rather *undesirably* than happily situated, as being exposed to so great a Danger.

But as none of the Disadvantages attending Wealth and Honour, can be justly imputed to a providential Direction; but rather to Mens own vitious, or imprudent Conduct; they ought in all Reason to take the Charge upon themselves: and, being distinguishingly favoured in a great many Respects, by the Station and Circumstances wherein they are placed, they have no more Ground to make the least Complaint, than those who are fixed below them.—
With such wonderful Skill and Kindness,
hath

hath the great Disposer of Men assigned to all their *Stations*! since the several Ranks and Orders are most admirably placed to the best Advantage for all: and their respective Privileges of one kind and another, seem so equally poised, that no *judicious* Person who hath well considered it, will presume to determine, on the whole of *this* Life in View of a *future*, what Station, or what Circumstances, *providentially* assigned, may deserve the Preference. Disadvantages and Privileges are, among every Order of Men, so skilfully intermixed, and so well adjusted, that were it in the Power of a competent Judge, to chuse his *Station*, he would find it as great a Difficulty to determine his Choice as can well be imagined: and, could he plainly and perfectly discern the Tendency, and the Event, of whatever might respect him, he would certainly fix on the Station and Circumstances which the all-wise Director of all Things had before assigned him.

I am well aware, that the common Temper, and the ordinary Practice of Mankind, may be thought a plain and perfect Contradiction to what I here observe:

“ For almost all (it may be said) of every
 “ Rank, appear, in the active Parts of
 “ Life, to be still aiming, projecting, and
 H “ striving

“ striving to advance, or alter their respective Circumstances.”

But to this it may be replied :—— That common Opinions, and common Practices, are of so little Moment in the Discovery of *Truth*, especially of such Truths as lie out of common Reach, that no Person of Understanding was ever known to lay considerable Stress upon them : nor can they in the *present* Case deserve much Regard. However, I am willing to enlarge a little in illustrating and confirming what is above advanced : and I hope the rather to be excused in it, as many perhaps may think, it strongly affects my present Argument : and as it will lead to several Observations that deserve particular Notice. Accordingly I remark,

FIRST : — “ That the Providence of
“ God doth rarely, if ever, *absolutely* fix
“ the particular Station, or Circumstances
“ of *any* one.”

This seems not agreeable to the present State of Men. For, as God hath endowed us with various Powers of being mutually helpful and serviceable to each other ; and, as reciprocal Utility may reasonably be concluded to be the immediate *principal* End of almost

almost all the Powers and Capacities we enjoy ; most certainly therefore, the *laudable* Exercise of those natural Talents, which are thus conducive to *social* Virtue, may properly be expected from every Rank of Men. And, as the right Improvement of what most Men are favoured with, will generally issue, if Opportunities also occur, in some Advancement in Circumstances ; 'tis undoubtedly, every one's Concern, to make such Improvement of them to as good Advantage as he can : and, when his Aims and Pursuits are laudable, and Success attends his Endeavours ; whatever Advancement is hereby attained, may be considered as the Station that God intended for him : nor will a *frequent* Variation of it affect my present Argument.

The Case is widely different, when Mens Aims at Advancement are either sensual, or selfish ; or, when the *Methods* they take are wrong, or irregular. These are so contrary to the Will of God, and to the Nature of Things, that there can be no Ground to suppose a divine Concurrence with them. Success may be *permitted*, but not *approved*. There may be sufficient Reasons to justify the *Permission* ; but the Perfections of God, and the Reasons of Things, cannot admit of the least *Approbation*. Such Advance-

ments therefore as are *thus* obtained, cannot properly be termed *providential* Advancements.

The Point then comes to this: when any one has a Prospect of improving his Condition by *regular* Methods; the Case may be considered as a providential Call, which plainly intimates the Will of God concerning it: but when there is no Capacity, or no Opportunity, to attempt it by *such* means, he ought to rest satisfied in his present Circumstances, and to make the best he can of them. Whereupon I observe farther,

SECONDLY, “ That ’tis Vice, or Folly,
 “ which induceth any one to endeavour, or
 “ *desire*, an Alteration in his Condition,
 “ when he hath Reason to be satisfied ’tis
 “ what God designed for him.”

And this may be concluded with sufficient Evidence, from what is just above observed.—Human Felicity, or a *right* Enjoyment of Life, may certainly be obtained by every one in the Measure most desirable, in whatever Rank he may be placed, provided he improveth rightly his Capacities and Opportunities. For the *needful* Goods of Life are provided for all alike; and are set

set before Men as in a common Stock ; from whence the lower, as well as higher Orders, may procure and enjoy their proper Portion with equal Advantage. — In Proof of this, let it here again be recollected ; that our proper Pleasures and Entertainments are either *animal* or *intellectual* : and that the former are derived from the *Tastes* Men have for delighting Objects ; and not immediately from the Objects themselves : for then the same Objects would always afford to all possessed of 'em, the same Pleasures ; also the same *Degrees* of 'em : which every one knows is contrary to Fact. — Now, pleasurable *Tastes* are not appropriated to one Rank of Men, any more than to another : nor is one Rank destitute of proper Objects that *suit* their respective Tastes, any more than another. Wherefore, they may equally enjoy themselves in very different Entertainments ; provided they partake equally of such as correspond to their several Dispositions. And I take it to be undeniable ; that there is no Inequality as to *this*, in what is provided for every Station in Life. So that every Sense, and every Appetite *truly natural*, may be as suitably ; and fully gratified in one *Station* as in another. — The Case of Individuals will be considered hereafter.

In like manner, *intellectual* Entertainments, and the Privileges also of *this* kind, do certainly lie in common. No Rank of Men is advanced above another in *natural* Endowments. The Capacities of the Mind, tho' vastly different in respect to *Individuals*, make no Difference, *as they are implanted by God* among the Orders in general. Indeed, Cultivation and Improvement, being most observable among the higher Ranks, because enjoying especial Advantages for it, do often produce a very great Difference in the *Exercise* of Mens Faculties, and the Knowledge and Discernment consequent on this; but unless such Attainments be *usefully* improved, (which is not very common) they receive this way no real Benefit. The lowest Rank, tho' not in like manner privileged, may employ their *uncultivated* Talents (wherein they are by Nature alike endowed) to as good Purpose in their low Sphere; and may hereupon enjoy (as will be shewn hereafter) as much Satisfaction in it, as any of their Superiors may in the like Improvement of *theirs*. And if they may as well enjoy themselves, both in animal Gratification, and intellectual Entertainment, (which are the only Sources of our present Happiness) as may those in the higher Stations;—what then but Caprice or Humour,

mour, but an idle groundless Imagination, (to suppose the best of it,) can induce any to seek, or desire, an Alteration of the Condition wherein *Providence* may have placed them? Must it not betray a very strange Conceit to imagine they can find a better Situation in Life than God hath kindly chosen for them?

What Occasion can there then be of Anxiety or Solitude? or of any *eager* Striving, to advance their present Station? What especially, should decoy them into wrongful or faulty Methods for it?—into Violences, or Frauds, or any *ungenerous* Dealing; from a senseless View of becoming happier?—This can only be the way to increase their Pain; but not to enlarge their Comfort. The Alteration, in *such* Case, will but mock their Aims, and vex them with Disappointment; yea, very likely, will sting them with Remorse, if they are not sottishly indolent, and occasion keen Reproaches, after all the Labour it hath cost them.

There seems therefore, on the whole, sufficient Reason to conclude; that our common most indulgent Parent hath so wonderfully contrived and managed our Affairs, that, in the needful and *best* Pro-

vision he hath made for the Good of all, he hath so kindly and skilfully divided the whole Race into various Orders, that no Rank can have Cause to complain on this Account, of the least unequal Treatment. All are placed to best Advantage, with respect to all : and each Order may as fully enjoy themselves in their several Stations, so far as such Enjoyment respects their *Rank*, as any *other* hath proper room to do.

Having now considered the Case of Mankind in those two more general Views; viz. Their *seeming* very unequal Assignments with regard to *Situation*, in the various Regions of the World : and also with respect to the different *Ranks* into which they are divided ; I proceed to examine in like manner, the Case of *Individuals* ; wherein is the greatest Difficulty that ariseth on the Subject : and here I shall endeavour to account for their respective Allotments in the following most observable Instances : viz.—In what respects their *intellectual Endowments* : — their *bodily State* : — and their Circumstances in *Externals*, or the outward Goods of this Life. And I hope to render it at least *probable*, there is no better Foundation for a Charge against Providence, in either of *those* Views, however

ever Matters may appear, than in the general Instances already examined. There may indeed be some *very extraordinary Cases*, which may perhaps deserve to be excepted: but these also, if there be any such, might no doubt be cleared up as satisfactorily as any other, could we better discern the Nature, and Reasons, and *Event* of Things.

I begin with the first mentioned.

C H A P.

C H A P. VII.

“ Mens different Circumstances
 “ considered in respect to their
 “ *intellectual Endowments.*”

I N *this* View it may be imagined, Men are treated by God in a *strangely unequal Manner*. “ For, (it may be said) the “ Capacities of some so *vastly* transcend “ what others are endowed with, that they “ seem to constitute a different Species of “ Beings. Yea, the *lowest* human Mind “ may be thought to be less distant from “ the appearing Understanding of some “ brute-Creatures, than from some of its “ own Order.” — Whether there be any Difference between the Souls of Men in their *unembodied* State, is perhaps a Question not easy to be resolved : nor does any present Argument require it. But, whatever may be in this, we have, as I conceive, sufficient Reason to conclude ; that the greatest Part of the Difference now observable in their Operations, is *originally* owing to the different Organs they animate : and the forming of *these*, is undeniably the Work of a divine Hand. Nor can any Difference relating to it be imputed to Men
 them-

themselves, but a faulty impairing, or a want of improving, the Capacities God has granted them.

All this may be admitted: but it will not much affect my Argument. For, as I would *first* observe in general, even the lowest human Mind may appear, if well examined, to be neither more unhappy, nor less capable of *Self-Enjoyment*, than one that is endowed with the most exalted Faculties. 'Tis certainly no Unhappiness, *considered in itself*, not to be as clear-sighted as *some* may be; provided, the *Ends* of Reason may be as well answered by a narrow Capacity, as they may by the most extended: nor can the Imperfection give any Uneasiness, unless *perceived*; or any farther than it is. Now the principal Ends of our being endowed with Reason, seem to be, (as hath been before observed)——to procure Good to ourselves: and to promote the Happiness of others:——whereby the Honour of the FOUNTAIN of Reason is undoubtedly most promoted.——Let us examine then the Case in each of these Views.

I shall consider it, FIRST, “As to *Self-Enjoyment*.”

And

And here let it be remembered : that *imaginary* Good, hath (as was proved before) the like Influence as *real*; and entertains Men frequently as much. From whence it seems to follow, that low Minds may be as much pleased in their low Entertainments, altho' derived from *Imagination* only, as the most exalted may in such as are adapted to *their* Capacities : yea, they may sometimes perhaps exceed them in *personal* Enjoyment ; at least in those Instances wherein it may be derived from *external* Objects. Their Entertainments *this* way are generally less allayed ; and their Relish for them keener ; than penetrating thoughtful People are wont to experience in *theirs*. 'Tis true, the clearer-sighted Men are ; the more extended are their Views ; and the truer Notions they have of Things. But what Advantage is hereby obtained ? *This* tends to depress their Opinion of such Objects ; and thereupon abates the Pleasure which the others are wont to take in them. This also adds, almost numberless Ways to their Solitudes and Cares ; and too frequently enlargeth *anxious Thoughtfulness*.—Whereas, dull Minds, and dim-sighted People, have few Apprehensions but those their *Senses* convey to them ; and, having also their Views confined within a narrow Compass, they seldom extend their Thoughts beyond the present

present Moment. And hence are *these* wont to go entirely into the Pleasures just before them, if suiting their Inclinations :——not being distasted with the Meanness of their Delights ; nor, under any Concern about such distant Consequences as may attend them. And, as *sensible* Enjoyment is esteemed by them their greatest Good ; they are, *in their own Opinion*, as happy in this respect, as their wiser fellow Mortals can be supposed to be in *their* more *rational* Entertainments.

Extensive Knowledge indeed, and clear Discernment, which are the Properties of the Wise, do, in Proportion to their Degrees, *greatly* difference the Persons *this* way distinguished. But, whatever Difference they make in Capacity, they make none in *Happiness* ; provided those who are least endowed, are as much, and as innocently pleased in *their Way and Manner*, as the others may be in *theirs*.—If this be not allowed ; I cannot see, how *any* Being but the *Supreme*, can be said to be truly happy : and perhaps might add,—or yet, how any other can, properly speaking, be happy *at all*. For, if *superior* Entertainments only are the Ground of Happiness, then will the *highest* among Men, if considered with a View to superior Beings, have really no Ground at all.

Nor

Nor can those *superior* Beings have a better Foundation than *Men*, if there are any Orders above them.— If Happiness be the Product only of *Superiority* in respect to the kinds of Pleasure, or of the Objects that please ; then, whilst there are Objects surpassing those that may be spoken of ; *these*, according to this Opinion, will deserve no Notice at all.

It must therefore either be acknowledged, that inferior Entertainments may as well afford a Ground for Happiness, to those lower Minds whose Capacities and Tastes are suited to them ; as higher Entertainments may to those who are superior ; or otherwise (as was noted above) there can be no Being but the *Supreme* that can be said to be truly happy ; which would run this Hypothesis into a plain Absurdity.

And let it farther be considered : that *animal* Delight centers always in the Mind, altho' it had not its Original there : and, when approved of by this, or not condemned, is properly *human* Pleasèdness ; that is, a sort of Happiness becoming *Men*. Neither the *Meanness* of the Entertainment, nor its being *imaginary*, (supposing it only such) can create a Difference. All that is needful to support this Argument,

ment, is, the *Measure* of being pleased, if *unblameably* pleased*. Neither the *Object* of such Delight, nor the *Manner* in which 'tis derived, doth really affect the Case†.

Wherefore, if what hath been observed under this Head may be admitted; (and it appears to me to have a just Foundation) then may the Conclusion before drawn undeniably follow; viz. That, in respect to *Self-Enjoyment*, or, to procuring Good to *ourselves*; God seems to have rendered the

* I add, if *unblameably* pleased: because, no vicious or faulty Pleasure, is, properly speaking, *human* Pleasure. It plainly contradicts our *rational* Being: nor have we any Capacities intended for it. Every Kind, and even every Degree, of such Pleasure, is *unnatural*: not at all suited to our *animal* Part; and much less, to our intellectual: 'tis rather *injurious* to both: and therefore deserves to be hated and avoided, as a Thing that is *monstrous*, as well as despicable.

† The following Resemblance may a little illustrate what I here aim at.—A Child, and a *Man*, may be equally loaded with very different Weights. And a tender Spirit may be as much afflicted on a small Occasion, as one that is hardy, couragious, and resolute, on a much greater.—The percipient Powers ought chiefly to be considered in every affecting Case; since the *Measure* both of Pleasure and Pain, is to be judged of principally from *these*, and not from the Objects that occasion either. *These* may be very different, and yet equally affect different Percipients.

lowest

lowest Mind as capable of it as the highest. This will farther appear under the following Head.

I shall therefore now examine the Case, SECONDLY, " With respect to *relative* " Good ; that *other* especial End for which " we are endowed with Reason ; and " which seems indeed to be the *principal*."

And here I would make a few Reflections on this latter Sentence, (as I take it to be a Matter of very great Moment to be fully convinced of it) before I enter on the Proof of what is chiefly proposed as to *this* Point. Accordingly I observe ; " That the " Consciousness of having kindly and generously endeavoured to promote our " Neighbour's Happiness, is a Source of " the *truest* and *highest* Pleasure we are capable of obtaining in *this* Life." Yea, there seems Ground to conclude ; that the Communication of Happiness, is a special Part of *divine* Felicity. Even God may derive his principal Entertainment from it. His being *possessed* of the highest Perfections, may not afford him as great Satisfaction, as the lowest of them may when *beneficently* exercised. Yea, it seems a Contradiction to consummate Wisdom and Goodness, to see an Opportunity, and to have

have an Ability, of doing any *adviseable* Good, and not to embrace the Season. In such Case, the Capacity would be useless and remain unactive, in those very Matters, and at those inviting Times, wherein it might be supposed it should readily exert itself.

But, whatever may be in this, it may here perhaps be objected: " That the
 " Considerations I have mentioned, sup-
 " posing them rightly founded, may be
 " fairly improved *against* my present Argu-
 " ment, instead of supporting it. For
 " those, it may be said, who are of low
 " Understandings, are by no means as
 " capable of being serviceable to others;
 " nor therefore of enlarging *this* way their
 " own Comfort, as their wiser Neighbours
 " are."

To this I would reply:—That this *other* End of Reason may certainly be as well answered, in respect to the *Aim* and *Expectation* of the Giver of it; and in respect also to Mens *own Good* as *this* way derived, by even the *lowest* Capacity, as it may by the most *exalted*.—God's Expectations this way, may undoubtedly be as well and as *fully* answered by the one, as by the other. For it cannot be supposed of *him*, that he

I expects

expects from any one, an Improvement of Talents beyond the measure in which he hath conferred them. When he finds *Fidelity* in the use of his Favours; it is all he requires; and all he can expect. The Manner, and Measure, in which they may be improved, can only correspond with the Measure that is granted. And since the lowest Servant may be as faithful in his little, as superior Servants may be in the larger Portions conferred on them; they stand as to this, on equal Ground; and will therefore certainly be as much approved by their common Master, the one, as the other.

But, should *this* be admitted, it may still be objected, “ That as Persons of mean Abilities are capable of but little Service to others; and consequently can obtain this way, but a low Degree of Comfort; in comparison of what results from the like beneficent Improvement of much higher Talents, they are therefore in *this* respect in less desirable Circumstances; and accordingly are herein treated with an unequal Degree of Favour, in the View I am now considering these Matters.”

To

To this it may be answered: That, as the Pleasure which is found in promoting our Neighbour's Happiness, ariseth in Mens Minds, not so directly from the actual Benefits conferred, be they greater or less: but rather, from a *delightful Consciousness* of having faithfully *improved* our Talents and Opportunities for it, there seems Reason to conclude; that the smallest Favours, when conferred with the same *Benevolence* as the greatest, afford an equal Ground of such Delight: for, whatever Difference there may be in the *Degrees* of 'em, there will then be none in the *Principle* of acting, which is the only laudable Source of the Pleasures this way derived. If a *Penny* be given to a needy Object with as good a Disposition by one, as a *Pound* may be bestowed by another; and bears an equal Proportion to their respective Circumstances; the Virtue certainly is the same; and so may be the Pleasure resulting from it. Am I capable of more Service than some other Person may be? My beneficent Acts may proportionably be more enlarged: but *he*, tho' less endowed, may as faithfully employ his lower Talents, as *I* may those conferred on *me*. *I* do but exert my Powers rightly; and hence enjoy the Comfort of it: and so may my weaker Neighbour employ and improve *his*; and will hereupon

have as good Foundation to approve of his Conduct, as *I* can have to approve of *mine*. His Regard to his Fellow-Creatures Good, and his Readiness to promote it, were, in *all* respects, as commendable as mine. He wanted not an *Inclination*; but only an *Ability*, to have been more serviceable. This Incapacity, being wholly natural, can be ascribed to *God* only who formed both of us, and distributed to each our respective Talents; and doubtless designed to make us equally happy, provided we shewed ourselves equal Objects of it. And from this there seems ground to conclude; that tho' Persons of low Understandings, may no way be capable of as extensive Usefulness, as those of higher Abilities; yet, when they act with equal Fidelity and equal Virtue, their Deserts are equal; (as was noted above) and are therefore a Foundation of equal delighting Consciousness, and of all the Pleasures derived from it.

What I have now observed with regard to this *very* difficult Point, viz. the Inequality that appears in the *Understandings* of Men, may suffice, I would hope, to support the Argument I have undertaken, as in *this* View*.

The

* In such abstruse Points as may not admit of Demonstration; or, of such evident Proof as may exclude

The next Instance I have proposed to consider, is; the *seeming* unequal Treatment of Men in the vastly different Circumstances that respect their *Bodies*.

exclude all rational Contest, a candid Reader will be satisfied with what appears most *probable*; and the Account I have given of the grand Difficulty before us, I apprehend is such. This Plea, will I hope be allowed in the like Instances.

C H A P. VIII.

“ Mens *bodily* State examined ;
 “ and the Difficulties arising
 “ on this Head, are modestly
 “ solved.”

I N attempting what I *here* propose, I would observe, *First*, in general ; that, as the different State of Men in what respects their *Bodies*, is supposed in my present Argument to be *properly providential*, and therefore to result from the established Laws of Nature, either with regard to the Circumstances of Birth ; or the assigned Course of Things in a Case of Sickness ; or in any Malady, or Maim, accidentally occasioned ; if God, in *those* Respects, had placed them on a perfectly equal Bottom ; that is, had he formed their Bodies at first, and afterwards preserved them, with equal Advantages of *this* kind ; he would manifestly have been obliged, to abrogate or alter those established Laws, altho’ the Product of consummate Wisdom, Equity, and Goodness ; and hereby have annulled, or over-ruled, the best Direction of Things respecting *this* World : and, were this supposable, the same might be concluded in every

every other Instance wherein it might be thought there was the like Occasion. And how would this have unhinged his first Institutions in the Order of Nature; and also sadly embarrassed (if I may so express it) his continuing Procedures in providential Government? But certainly there can be no Occasion for so wild an Imagination, when 'tis so very evident, that a *seeming* want of Favour to some, either in *this*, or any other respect, may very easily be compensated by distinguishing Kindness in some other Instance: for then the Balance would be righted, how unequally soever it might before be thought to have been poised. And the undoubted Impartiality of all God's Proceedings, is, as I conceive, a sufficient ground to conclude, that 'tis always *actually done*, altho' it may not plainly appear, so far as any Sufferer, in any particular Instances, may be found a proper Object of it *.

But, to render more apparent what I here aim at, I shall more particularly consider *this* Case in the following respective

* What is here observed, may perhaps be thought, a begging the Question in Hand: but as the Supposition hath an evident Ground; a candid Reader may allow such Resort in a few Instances not easily accounted for, when the Argument in general hath been sufficiently proved.

Views: viz. by observing; “ That *bodily*
 “ Advantages of whatever kind, are of no
 “ great Moment to Men: and from this
 “ it may be inferred; that *opposite* Cases
 “ deserve not much Regard — *Further* :
 “ That whatever Grief or Concern any bo-
 “ dily Defect or Ailment may unavoidably
 “ occasion; such *unremediable* Disadvan-
 “ tages may sufficiently be compensated,
 “ (and doubtless are to proper Objects) by
 “ a proportioned distinguishing Favour in
 “ some other Instances.”

FIRST, “ I observe; that bodily Advan-
 “ tages of whatever kind, are of no great
 “ Moment to Men: and especially con-
 “ sidering, how they actually turn to most
 “ that enjoy them.”

They are at best of no greater Import-
 tance, than as they are improved to some
 useful Purpose. — Let us examine this
 Matter in some of the most esteemed In-
 stances of bodily Advantages. I shall
 mention, *First*, “ *Comeliness*, and *Beauty*
 “ in the different Sexes.”

Now, *these* are, I conceive, of very small
 Account. The *most* they recommend to,
 is but *fanciful* Esteem; which may perhaps
 procure some Respect and Deference from
 in-

injudicious People, whose Opinion of others is governed more by outward Appearance, than by what deserves Regard. But the Wise are directed by another Rule. *These* form their Judgment, and guide their Respect, by what they perceive in any one of *internal* Worth:—by the Measure, and the Fruit, of his *intellectual* Endowments; and by the virtuous Dispositions he is observed to *cultivate*. Bodily Distinctions are of little Weight with *those*, unless they are improved to some valuable Account. But how seldom is *this* to be any where found? They rather generally turn, I believe I may say, even *naturally* turn, when possessed in a considerable Degree, to the Detriment and Danger of those who obtain them; instead of promoting their *rational* Comfort, or their real Advantage. They are not only productive of Conceit and Haughtiness, those turbulent degrading Vices; but frequently also enkindle such Flames of Impurity in the other Sex, as flash back their Fury into their own Corruptions, 'till both blaze up together, and become perhaps unquenchable.

These obvious Considerations may very much abate, if they do not over-rule, the *imagined* Disadvantages of an opposite Case. For if Beauty and Comeliness are at best
of

of small Account ; and also generally attended, if they may not naturally, by the Evils I have pointed at ; Deformity and Unsightliness need not, on those Accounts, give any one great Concern ; but should rather sit easy on the deformed Person's Mind, as he is hereby happily guarded against all those destructive Vices which the contrary Lot would have exposed him to.

But, supposing an unsightly Person may inevitably undergo any *real* Disadvantage by means of some Deformity ; the Consideration I have recourse to on all the like Occasions, may set the Balance at rights ; as there is certainly ground to conclude, from the unbiassed Equity of our common indulgent Parent, that 'tis (as will presently be shewn) some way or other *compensated*, so far as he is found a proper Object. Moreover, his Disadvantages in bodily Appearance, might in Kindness be intended, as the most conducive means to form in him some internal Beauties, highly transcending any that are bodily, which he might not otherwise have attained. *These*, may not only have prevented the natural Eruptions of the Vices above-mentioned ; but have induced him to cultivate the contrary endearing and highly esteemed Virtues, viz. *Meekness, Humility, Affability, and Benevolence,*

volence, which strongly attract the Affections of Mens *Hearts*, in lieu of the Admiration and light Esteem of their *Fancies*. *These* also may have protected him (as was intimated above) against the envenomed Darts of impure and lascivious Eyes ; and set him without the Bound of *filthy* sensual Gratifications ; those *grand Ensnarers* of Men ! — those *ruinous common* Evils ! and to be thus secured against this *one* Vice ; — this *foul Sink of Putrefaction* ! which swallows up Innumerable ! is, of *itself*, sufficient to reconcile a virtuous Mind to all those small Distastes which the ugliest human Form can be well supposed attended with.

I might mention some other Considerations, to obviate such Objections as some perhaps may raise, on the different Appearance Men make in the Instance now before us ; but I account it needless. Wherefore I proceed to examine also,

SECONDLY, “ The distinguishing *imagined* Privilege which many enjoy beyond others, in *Strength*, and *Agility* ; “ as *these* also are thought of great Advantage to Men, in particular in the *lower* “ Stations of Life.”

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It must indeed be acknowledged; that *Strength* is very desirable, if it be not directly needful, on *many* Occasions. The more of this the *Labourer* enjoys, with greater ease doth he go thro' his Labours: and is also hereby enabled to provide with greater Advantage for himself and Family. — And the *Artifi's* Dexterity, thro' the Pliantness of his Members, is of like Advantage to *him*. — Whereas, the natural Weakness and Inactivity of others in the like Stations, and Occupations of Life, tho' they may not quite disable them from their several Employ's, may cause them to drudge on in them with Difficulty and Regret.

This 'tis true is an Infelicity which many labour under; but not of such Moment as to deserve any great Concern. Use, and Custom, and a *Continuance* of Things, render them, in all Cases, the less affecting. So that the Facility with which strong and robust Labourers perform their daily Work, is but little attended to; and thereupon adds but little to their actual Comfort. — In like manner, the Difficulty and Discouragement which the Weak may undergo in discharging *theirs*, a constant Endurance doth very much abate, 'till they scarce regard their Influence. But, allowing the utmost Strength to any Objections that may
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be formed under this Head, the Consideration above-mentioned is an obvious and full Reply to them.

I would now turn the Inquiry to more important Instances: and accordingly shall next consider the Case,

THIRDLY, " With respect to *Health*,
" and *Ease*, as opposed to their Contraries,
" viz. *Sickness*, and *Pain*."

And here I shall first observe; by way of Concession, (as I have generally done before, to give the fairest Scope to Persons of different Sentiments,) " That *those* very
" valuable Privileges, which are the natural Product of an happy Constitution,
" are by some Persons enjoyed without Interruption, thro' a long Course of Years;
" whereby the Entertainments, and various Gratifications that lie within their
" Sphere, stand open and fair before them;
" and may to great Advantage be partaken of, if they do not themselves prevent it.
" —Whereas others, on the other Hand,
" are brought into the World with such *unhappy* Constitutions, that Sickness, and
" Pains, Disorders, and Languishments,
" not perhaps to be remedied, may all their Days attend them. And some
" have this way such strong Trials, as have
" *sadly*

“ *sadly imbibittered*, as well as rendered taste-
 “ less, almost every Stream of Comfort.”
This is a Condition quite the Reverse to
that above pointed at; and seems as difficult
 to be reconciled to an impartial Treatment
 of Men, as *any* Instance I can recollect.—
 In *this* Part of the Inquiry, I would there-
 fore proceed with all the Care and Atten-
 tion it deserves. Accordingly I *here* ob-
 serve,

FIRST, “ That *Health* and *Ease*, tho’
 “ such Blessings in themselves, seem but
 “ little enjoyed; and are seldom *rightly*
 “ *improved*, by those who are possessed of
 “ the largest Portions of them.”

These generally behave as if they were
 tasteless unaffecting Goods, and thereupon
 little regarded, after long Enjoyment espe-
 cially; which is ordinarily indeed the Case
 as to *every other earthly Good*.——When
Health in particular hath its proper Influ-
 ence, and adds *considerably* to the Comforts
 of Life; ’tis just after the Removal of some
 strongly affecting Sickness: while the Do-
 lours of *that* preserve their Impressions; the
 Delightfulness of *this* may be gratefully
 regarded. Then do those contrary Cases
 stand plainly in *Opposition*: and, by the
 strong Light they cast on each other, ap-
 pear

pear before the Mind in a proportioned affecting View. *Then* may the Remembrance of past Pain, excite and quicken the Sensibility and Pleasure of present Ease. And *then* do Men perceive the wide Difference there is between Weakness, and Strength; —Languor, and Sprightliness; a want of Relish for every Object of Sense, and every intellectual Entertainment; and the contrary quick Disposedness to taste of every Joy, and to revel in every Delight. *Then*, if ever, may this *grand* Blessing affect them as it ought. *Then* do they find the Advantage, and feel the Pleasure it affords. But how soon do those Impressions gradually wear off? and how little afterward is the Favour attended to? and, when not attended to, how can it promote their *observed* Happiness, whatever Portion they have of it?—As this is commonly the Case; perhaps, almost always the Case after long Enjoyment; it must much abate the Objection as in this View. Privileges and Favours, considered in themselves; and as they may respect the Persons possessed of them, have very often a quite different Aspect; and ought accordingly to be differently judged of. *Health* in particular is certainly a *Curse*, when vitiously perverted: nor is it a *Favour* to any who disregard the
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Obligation, and make no right Improvement of it.

As God therefore foresees, how all his established Rules in Nature will actually turn to every one, he may permit his wise Directions to take their ordinary Course as to *Health* and *Sickness*, either in Favour, or Displeasure, to the respective Persons herein concerned. Nor can there be any *sure* ground to conclude concerning either, but by the Effects they severally produce on one, and on another, in their appearing manner of Life. And therefore I would further observe,

SECONDLY, " That a strong and healthful Constitution, attended with Ease and Sprightliness, generally turns unhappily against those who are thus distinguished, instead of turning to their Advantage."

The Abuse 'tis true is their own inexcusable Fault : but to those who thus pervert it, 'tis far from *proving* a Favour. Now 'tis obvious to every observing Person, that the greater Part of the ordinary Evils in Life, result from the Predominance of our Appetites and Senses over the Government of Reason. *This* is the sad Occasion of most of our faulty Steps, and of the manifold

manifold Sorrows they lead us to. Vigorous Health, in the Measure 'tis enjoyed, renders our various Appetites *keen* and *craving*; and frequently very *unruly*. Whereupon, the Healthful and Vigorous, being strongly inclined to sensual Gratifications, have need of a proportioned powerful Balance on the Side of Reason, to prevent an undue Indulgence to them. But the Clearness of Mens Minds doth seldom bear Proportion to the *Strength* of their Constitutions; nor hath any direct Affinity with it: rather, perhaps, the Advantages of Health are often the Occasion of *clouding* the Understanding, instead of clearing the Capacities of it. And, in *this* View, the Healthful may appear to be less desirably situated than their pained and sickly Neighbours.

Further: A vigorous strong Constitution, and a long Enjoyment of Health, are wont to set Mortality, and the Concerns of another World, at an unaffecting Distance: and thereupon the *little* Things of this Life, are apt to engross Mens Prospects and Pursuits in so great a Degree, that they rarely turn a *prevailing* Thought on a future State of Existence. And indeed the Blandishments of *this* World are so various, and so enchanting; and tally so

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exactly to every animal Taste, that 'tis far from being easy, even for *raised* Minds, while their Appetites are keen and strong, to disencumber themselves from them so far as their principal Interests are concerned. Did the Influence of Reason correspond always with the Vigour of Constitution, it might then as well maintain its Government when the Appetites are strongest, in Consequence of Health; as when most enfeebled for want of it: but frequent Observation, as well as Experience, conclude the Case to be otherwise. It rather *loseth*, than gains, (as was intimated above) and is generally more and more disabled by it. I might mention several other Disadvantages which are the usual Consequents of a robust and vigorous Constitution, but account it needless.

On the whole therefore, if those greatest bodily Blessings, viz. *Health*, *Ease*, and *Strength*, do add but little, after long Enjoyment, to the Comforts in Life, as being but little attended to: and if they have, on the other Hand, pernicious Effects on most, instead of turning to real Advantage; and are very seldom beneficially improved to wise and virtuous Purposes, may there not be ground to conclude; that all Things considered, they are not *actually* of great
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Moment to Men; and especially to those who are herein most distinguished? In themselves considered, they are invaluable Blessings; but thro' the Vitioufness, or Folly, of those who enjoy them; and, in many Cases, thro' their *natural Tendency*, they either turn unhappily, or to little Account at farthest. To judge rightly of Matters, wherein Difficulties arise on one Side and the other, the various *Circumstances* attending them must be carefully examined, as well as the Things themselves, and also, be very *impartially* and *judiciously* weighed, or there will be little Likelihood of setting the Balance right; and less Opportunity of discerning the several *Degrees* in which either End preponderates. Indeed, our present Views are so contracted and cloudy, that we have little Capacity of judging exactly, or of judging *perfectly*, of the minutest Matter that may concern us. And for want of using, and improving as we might, the Capacities we have, we generally strangely err in our Notions and Determinations concerning most Things; and rarely discern any one Thing in as clear and true Light as we are rendered capable. Heedlessness and Sloth, together with the Prejudices of Education, or Interest, Vogue, or Formality, very of-

ten prevent it ; especially in such Instances as oppugn the common Sentiment.

But I am not willing to enlarge on this : and therefore shall take Leave to conclude on the Whole ; that the *providential* Want of an healthful Constitution deserves not much to be regretted, when the contrary affecting Case is wisely and piously improved ; of which every afflicted Person is capable ; and is not to be excused if neglecting it.

I will add to what has been observed ; that *providential* Evils of *whatever* Kind, may perhaps be the Effects of *distinguishing Favour*, instead of being the Evidence of the least Unkindness.—Might not the *all-discerning Eye* perceive the Danger to which Health and Ease would have exposed the afflicted Person, had *this* Portion been assigned him ; and thereupon have indulgently prevented it, by placing him in contrary Circumstances ? or, might not the latter, on some Account or other have been found a more eligible Case ? Who can take upon him to be a Judge of these Matters ? or, to determine in the least concerning them ? Most certainly the Objects of divine Favour may *absolutely depend*, in whatever Circumstances they are, on the best

best Discoveries of it that unerring Wisdom, and extended Goodness, did find adviseable: nor is it possible to discern, in any *one* Instance, the very least Failure in it. This leads me to that other general Consideration I mentioned before, wherein I observed,

THIRDLY, “ That, whatever Grief or
 “ Concern *providential* Ailments, or De-
 “ fects, may inevitably occasion, we have
 “ ground to conclude, from the Equity
 “ and Goodness of the Supreme Director,
 “ they are sufficiently *compensated*, one
 “ way or another, by a proportioned In-
 “ crease of Favour in more desirable In-
 “ stances.”

I repeat it here again: that my present Argument hath respect only to *providential* Ailments;—to those Maladies alone, of whatever kind, that are not to be remedied, or abated, by any Means within our Power, of which we might have sufficient Notice. ’Tis evident and undeniable, that Men frequently impute to a providential Hand the Sufferings and Sorrows they bring upon themselves; or otherwise such *Portion* of them, as their Faultiness, or Folly, may have been the Occasion of. Some (*e. g.*) inexcusably add to their afflictive Circum-

stances, by viewing and pondering the apprehended happier Case of some of their Neighbours. And it must indeed be acknowledged, that Objects, and Cases, when set in Opposition, have usually the stronger Influence on each other's Operations; but not necessarily, nor naturally, if distinctly considered. *Sickness*, e. g. is not in *itself* the more affecting, or more dolorous, because undergone in the View of Health; nor Pain the more pungent, because a Person in perfect Ease, or nothing ailing, may stand perhaps near it. Every Object, and every Case, hath, in itself, no other than its natural proper Effects, which are always uniform, tho' differently operating on different Percipients. The Alteration is occasioned by the different Eye, the different Manner of perceiving, or the different Imagination, of those who receive Impressions from it.

But what Ground or Reason can any Person have, to conceive of himself as more severely dealt with than his Neighbour, because perhaps he may want the *Sense*, or *Member*, the *Health*, or *Ease*, which the other may enjoy? or because enduring the Pain or Languishment, which *he* may be exempted from? Is my own Case the more afflictive, because my Neighbour is thought

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to be happier? Hath *his* Felicity the least Influence in multiplying or magnifying *my* disconsolate Circumstances, any other way than by my own Imagination? Were I actuated by Reason, I should *rejoice* at his Advantages, because a *Kinsman*, at least by Nature, whose Case and Interests I have a joint Concern in; and hereupon should somewhat sooth, if not considerably alleviate, my own immediate Sufferings. To *increase* them therefore, or to render their Weight the heavier, on so uncharitable a Ground as this, is not only extravagantly foolish, but perfectly inexcusable.

Further, many afflicted Persons renew often to their Minds the Sufferings that are *past*, by recounting them to others, or revolving them sorrowfully in their own Thoughts; and frequently also fright themselves with ghastly Phantoms of what they are further to endure thro' the remaining Part of Life; as if their present Burthen did sit too light upon them; and therefore the Weight both of past and future Sufferings must be senselessly added by their *own* Hand, to render it less supportable. *Reason* would direct in this other View, to a different Conduct. *This* would teach them, that Evils past may administer Consolation, if on no other Account, even

because they are *past*. And to be free for the *present* from those that are to come, supposing them inevitable, is some Ground of Comfort too, that they do not as yet approach them. *Sufficient to the Day is the Evil thereof*. Moreover, some Hope of their being alleviated, at least in some Degree, may administer further Support. Now, all such additional Loads of Sorrow as Men heap upon themselves being beside the real Case, are out of the Inquiry I am now making: and so are all those *Degrees* of *inevitable* Affliction, which God hath given us Power to remove, or *mitigate*: and we are certainly thus impowered, in some Degree or other, in every afflictive Case. For, as we are endowed with Reason, we are hereby directed, among other conducive Methods for it, to exercise in particular these following supporting Virtues, which may and *ought* to be exercised on all Occasions of this Nature; viz. *Fortitude*, *Patience*, and *Resignation*. It may be of some Use to touch a little on each of these, as I am desirous of improving occasional Observations, altho' not consistent with that Conciseness which some would be better pleased with *.

Fortitude

* I have often *willingly* digressed in this Discourse, to render it as extensively useful as the Observations

Fortitude is a Virtue of which *all* Men are capable, in their proper Measure, under every afflictive Circumstance. And in exercising this, they endeavour to rouse up their manly Powers, and with steady Resolution to resist the disturbing Foe. And, so far as this noble Spirit is steadily exerted, the Force of an Affliction, of whatever kind, is bravely surmounted, or otherwise abated; whereupon the Sufferer feels little in Proportion of the Weight that lies upon him; and sustains, with Courage and Constancy, what is actually felt. Neither magnifying Fears, nor multiplying Fancies, which raise imaginary Terrors in pusillanimous Minds, are permitted by this manly Principle, to have any prevailing Influence. This is that noble Part which *Reason* directs to, and would prevail on Men to act, in every afflictive Case, did they carefully regard its Dictates.

In like manner, the Exercise also of *Patience*, will be further serviceable on the same Account. *This* Virtue prevails on Men, to take on their Burthens contentedly and quietly: by which means they gall the

I have been led to make, in handling any Part of it, appeared to afford me Room. In which I hope to obtain the candid Reader's Excuse.

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less, and fit the lighter. Whereas Impatience and Restlessness have the contrary Effects: for *this* unhappy Temper excites them to twist and toss, when under Affliction; and thereby works it the deeper into their Minds, and greatly increaseth the Pain of it.

Further, *Submission* and *Resignation* to the divine Will, are another excellent Antidote in a trying Case, which our Reason also dictates, and would oblige us to apply to it, did we rightly attend its Counsels. By this I understand, a Temper and Behaviour opposite to Fretfulness, Repining, and Murmuring, which are other sad Ingredients that strongly imbitter the Lives of many, when unhappily intermixed with dolorous Circumstances. A repining Spirit, whatever way afflicted, industriously placeth its Sufferings and Sorrows in the most disconsolate View; and miserably frights itself with Phantoms and Ghosts of its own raising. And then afterwards runs into Murmurs and Complaints at its hard Lot, as if none of its fellow Creatures were alike unhappy. This is another extremely senseless Course, by which many increase their *providential* Afflictions, and wretchedly enhance the Pain of them. Whereas a resigned and submissive Disposition, by yielding
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ing gently to the Hand of God, abates the Edge of the Suffering laid upon it, and renders it abundantly the less affecting. No better Safeguard can there be against the strongest Battery, than yielding Earth, or a Mount of Feathers.

Thus may we much alleviate *unavoidable* Evils, by exercising these and the like Virtues, as the Reason we are endowed with would direct and prompt us to, did we carefully regard its Dictates. And those Measures of Affliction which we suffer by neglecting it, may be justly charged on ourselves.

But, to come more directly to what is here proposed, I am willing to allow the Objections, that may be raised under this Head, their utmost Force: and therefore shall put the Case in as affecting a View as can reasonably be supposed.—Let us then place before our Minds the most miserable Object as to *bodily* Defects, or Ailments, we can well conceive of.—Who can pretend to put the Balance of such Case on a proper Poise, whereby to make the Trial, unless he was as well informed of every Favour conferred on him, as he imagines he is, of his extremely miserable Circumstances? — May not this Sufferer be so far distinguished in
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some valuable Privileges, beyond those who enjoy the greatest bodily Advantages, as may render his Condition, on the *whole*, at least *equally* desirable? Is not the *Mind* of Man the most considerable Part of him? and are not the Faculties of *this*, of far greater Account, than the *Members*, or *Senses*, or even *Health* of the Body? And will not a little overplus Favour in respect to *these*, at least balance sufficiently, if not greatly outweigh, whatever Advantages attend the other?

Let us suppose a Person enjoying, on the one Hand, *Health* in as great a Measure, and with as little Intermiſſion, as any Mortal was ever favoured with; but having at the same time, a natural strong Propensity to boisterous Passions; or a Constitution alike inclining him to vitious Gratifications: the Disadvantage surely of this latter Case must be owned to outweigh greatly the distinguishing Privilege of the other.— And supposing he is also favoured with all the Advantages of *Beauty*, or *Comeliness*, as well as with the Blessing of *Health*;— with the nicest Proportions in Limbs and Features that were ever enjoyed;— but, with a Mind uncommonly cloudy, or contracted, thro' Weakness, or want of Judgment. How little Regard in such a Case would

would be shewn, to those bodily Advantages in which he is so much distinguished? Of how small an Account, in Comparison of the other, would these appear to be?

And let us, on the other Hand, conceive of some *other* Person in even the greatest *Deformity*; but inwardly adorned with a bright and beautiful Understanding, and with consequent exalted Principles and Dispositions, whereby he directs both his Temper and Behaviour in the most engaging manner; and is ready to be as serviceable to *any* of his fellow Creatures as his Talents enable him.—Who can resist the strong Attraction of such a noble Character? or refrain esteeming and loving, to a high Degreee, the Person it belongs to, how unsightly soever in outward Appearances?

Further: to put the Case in a yet stronger Light: let us also suppose the deformed Body to be sickly and pained;—it may be, *extremely* languishing, and *pungently* pained: but the Mind of such Person so healthful and easy, and so firmly established in the Paths of Virtue, that he bears up like an *Hero* under all his Trials, and balanceth the Weight of his bodily Afflictions, by the joyous Exultations of a well-directed Spirit.

Spirit. This cannot be thought a fanciful Representation: for, in some *eminent* Instances, it hath been plainly evidenced. But *supposing* such a Case:—*What a Counterpoise is here!* What an admirable Intermixture with his dolorous Circumstances!

Were this Case and Character set opposite to another in a contrary Condition;—to a beautiful Body, but deformed Mind; and supposing such a Body may be also privileged with a constant State of Health, and with all the Advantages that may attend such a State:—but the inward superior Part, pining perhaps with Envy; or burning with Lust, to which his Constitution might prevalently lead him; or foaming with Revenge; or tortured with Malice; or stung with Remorse; or deeply pierced, and dreadfully pained with some other internal Malady:—In *such* a View of these contrary Cases, who is there, of Understanding, but would greatly prefer the *first* mentioned Condition, to this I have here supposed? And may we not conclude from the Arguments and Considerations I have before mentioned; that there actually is some or other such Commixture in Mens different Circumstances?—such Alloys in their Advantages; and such a Counterpoize to their Grievs, so far at least as may sufficiently

ciently obviate whatever Objections against Providence may be suggested on *this* Head?

Having now offered what I take to be satisfactory as to *this* Instance; I shall proceed to consider next the Case of Mankind, in respect also to the *external* Goods of Life. And, since the most remarkable of these, are *Wealth* and *Honour*, I shall carefully examine it in both those Instances.

C H A P.

C H A P. IX.

“ The Distinctions among Men
 “ with respect to *Riches*, and
 “ *Poverty*, and the usual Con-
 “ sequents of these, considered,
 “ and improved.”

THERE appears, in all civilized Countries, so wide a Difference in the Circumstances Men are placed, as *thus* also considered, that in this other View, the Allotments of Providence are, it may be thought, by no means to be reconciled to a similar Treatment of them. “ For some, it may be said, are so wonderfully indulged in Wealth and Affluence, that they have, in the Psalmist’s manner of expressing it, *even more than Heart could wish*. Whereupon, they are not only incited, but have room to gratify to the utmost every animal Appetite, and to fill up every Desire, however fanciful or extravagant.—Whereas, a great many others are the miserable Slaves of Indigence and Meanness; having scarcely sufficient, with all the Toil they are capable of, to procure the
 “ Necess-

"Necessaries of Life. So *vast* a Disproportion in those external Goods may be every where observed." — To this it may be replied,

FIRST, "That Mens different Circumstances in those external Things, are very seldom to be ascribed to Providence with respect to *particular Persons*."

That there should be in general among Men, different Stations, and different external Circumstances, was (as hath been shewn before) a most admirable Direction of human Affairs; as being needful and advantageous on a great many Accounts, to promote and secure their common Interests. Nor can we conceive how the Case could have been otherwise; considering the different Tempers, and the different Manners of Men, unless some divine Interposer had prevented it. Those who conduct themselves by prudent and virtuous Measures, improve their Opportunities of increasing their Substance, by a *careful, industrious, and frugal* Management; which, in the *natural* Course of Things, doth generally succeed to good Advantage: and Providence may be supposed to concur ordinarily with such *proper* Methods, when *regularly* used, as the Dictates of Reason,

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which are plain Intimations of the Will of God, directing them to apply to, and improve on this Occasion. Nor can it on the contrary be expected, that God should *ordinarily* interpose, to prevent the Success of such *faulty* Methods, as the Oppressive and Fraudulent, or any other wrongful Agents, are wont to practise in *their* Pursuits of Gain; whereby the Circumstances and Stations of Multitudes of People have been very much advanced above what they originally were.

On the other Hand, a great many others have *sottishly* diminished the Substance they were possessed of, by their Sloth or Indolence: and some have sunk into Penury and Distress, by their Pride, or Prodigality; their Rioting, or Intemperance; or some other such wasting Vices. As therefore the greatest Part by far of Mens different Circumstances in Life, have manifestly been owing to their own Management; (which in all Reason should be allowed them) there can no Objection be formed against Providence, in any Case of *this* Nature, however remarkable it may appear. All that can justly be ascribed to Providence, must either proceed from the Circumstances of *Birth*, or otherwise from
some

some eventual and unavoidable Occurrences
in the after-Course of Life.

As for those of *Birth*, these may properly be considered as the natural Event of a most perfect Direction of Things, not liable on *any* Account to the least Censure. Nor does it appear they were intended, either in favour, or want of Kindness, to the *particular* Members of *any* Family. They rather seem an undetermined Lot that falls eventually, thro' the established Laws of Nature, to their several distinguished Portions. — But, to allow the Objection even greater Strength than can reasonably be demanded, let us suppose some Distinction between the Rich and the Poor, *providentially* intended with a View to *particular Persons*. On *this* Supposal, the imagined wide Difference may be found, if duly examined, to have little Influence in Reality on human *Happiness*, in whatever View we may consider it; and therefore to lay but a small Foundation, if any, for the least Complaint on *this* Head. However, as 'tis generally thought a Matter of mighty Moment, I shall point out, in the most observable Instances, the various Circumstances both of Wealth and Poverty: and I hope to make it evident, there is very little in either State, that tends

to promote, or yet to prevent, the *right* Enjoyment of Life.—*Wealth*, with all its Fruits, is *far* from being a Fountain of such wonderful Felicity as most imagine: nor is *Poverty* so frightful, or so wretched a Source of Misery as 'tis generally apprehended. Let us therefore carefully examine,

FIRST, “What are, in *Reality*, the “Advantages, that may *rationaly* be “proposed in the fullest Enjoyment of “*Wealth*.”

This indeed is that grand Idol to which all Mankind, excepting a very few comparatively, have, in every *civilized* Country, and in every Age of the World, profoundly paid their Homage. Nor can we wonder at this; as it offers to its Votaries *whatever their Hearts desire*. But all its specious Promises are either delusive, or very scantily performed; unless perhaps to some *steadily* virtuous and wise Possessor. For *firmly* established Virtue, and also *uncommon* Wisdom, are needful to improve the fullest Stores of Wealth to the *rational* Enjoyment of Life. And *too frequently*, have the Baits and Snares attending it, a baneful Influence even on *those* Stores. Indeed, affluent Fortunes are not in Reality a valuable Fa-
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your to any, unless they are endowed with proper Capacities, and a virtuous Disposition, to make some useful Improvement of them.—But, what Increase of *rational* Comfort, or of *any* Entertainment becoming Men, can the Wise and Virtuous propose to themselves in the Possession of Wealth, beyond what the poorest Peasants may obtain, if they are not destitute of the ordinary Supports of Life? And this is rarely if ever, the *faultless unavoidable* Case of any distressed Mortal. 'Tis true, the former have a valuable Privilege beyond the latter, of improving their Minds in useful Knowledge; and thereby of enlarging both their personal Entertainment, and their social Utility, when their affluent Circumstances are *rightly improved*. But, supposing such a Case, what before hath been observed of *intellectual* Distinctions, may convince them there is little ground to imagine, that even this can turn to considerable Account in promoting their real Happiness. For, if the meanest Peasant may as laudably improve his *uncultivated* Talents, as the Prince may those he has never so much advanced by means of his special Privileges; (which is certainly a Case that is very supposable) he hath hereby a Claim to the same Degree of Praise; and may also equally obtain the

rational Comfort resulting from it. The *real* Value of any Capacity, or of any Acquisition, must always be judged of, by the *real Advantage*, or the *actual* Service, it turns to *. But I need not enlarge on this; it being too rarely an Advantage which the Wealthy improve, either personally, or socially, to any considerable Purpose.

The *other* more commonly esteemed Privileges of a plentiful Fortune; and which are generally most attended to; are, the full Gratification of their bodily Appe-

* No Capacity or Power but what is some way usefully employed, can deserve Regard: nor could it otherwise give to the Possessor the least *rational* Satisfaction. A dormant Capacity, while unserviceable, is of no Account;—is in Reality *Nothing*; or the same as if not enjoyed. It may give Pain to the Being endowed with it, if faultily neglected, or no way improved; but cannot administer Comfort: for Utility alone, respecting either the Possessor himself, or some other percipient Beings, is the Source of all *rational* Comfort derived from any such Powers. From whence we may perhaps conclude, that even the *Supreme Being*, might not have had the full Enjoyment of his Perfections, had they not been *beneficially* exercised: *i. e.* in forming Creatures capable of Happiness, or of attaining and enjoying proper Good; and in making a full Provision for the actual Attainment and Fruition of it. This Consideration, if rightly founded, may be improved to good Advantage.

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tites, and the fanciful Entertainments, of one kind and another, with which it may richly furnish them. But a *wise* Possessor can find little ground to value himself on *those* Accounts, in whatever Degree he may *this* way be distinguished. His Circumstances indeed have set him above the Labours and Cares of the lower Ranks of People; and enable him to gratify even the farthest Cravings of every Sense and Appetite, with every imagined Good. But surely he would cease to deserve the Character, should *animal* Gratifications be thus much regarded. *Such* a one must know, that the Labours of the Poor turn vastly to their Advantage in the important Article of *Health*; the greatest Blessing of *this* Life excepting an healthful Mind: and also, that the want of daily Exercise, is almost as baneful to this as the deadliest Poisons are. Ease and Indolence, are rather therefore a Curse, than any desirable Good. And as for the *showy* Entertainments, of whatever kind; *these* scarcely deserve to be at all mentioned. How can *Wisdom* take proper Delight, either in the Cringings of fawning Parasites; or in the Gape and Admiration of low People? Most certain it is; that the Grandeur and Magnificence of a stately Edifice; the Richness of its Furniture; the Finery of

Gardens; the Sumptuousness of Equipage; the Attendance of Hirelings; or any other the like Gew-gaws; are such low grounds of *rational* Entertainment, that nothing else but the *Vanity* of Men can set a Value upon them. *Wisdom* can find little in those gaudy Shews to add to its Delights, unless they are improved to some *useful* Purpose. Indeed, if they render the Possessor of greater Weight in his good Example; or beneficent Counsels; or, of more extended Influence in social Services, than he might otherwise have obtained; they may then turn to some laudable Account; and the Consciousness of *this* may increase his Comfort. But what is there, even in *such* supposed Case, that may not be as well attained some other more promising way? *Wisdom* and *Virtue*, when they manifestly appear, will certainly procure sufficient Notice, without the Assistance of Wealth and Grandeur; and will every where obtain such Weight and Deference as any beneficent Aim and Endeavour may have Occasion for.

But some perhaps may object, after all that has been said:—"That, as we are
 " compounded of an *animal* Part, as well
 " as rational, our present Felicity must
 " be acknowledged to consist, in some De-
 " gree,

“ gree, in a proper Gratification of our
 “ Appetites and Senses, which God hath
 “ plentifully provided for, by a rich Va-
 “ riety of suitable delighting Goods. And
 “ is there not in *this* View, a very wide
 “ Difference between those who are pos-
 “ sessed of the largest Portions of ’em, and
 “ such as have scarce sufficient to support
 “ themselves in Life ?”—To this I reply,

FIRST, “ That altho’ it be admitted,
 “ that sensible Enjoyment is a Part of our
 “ present Happiness, yet will no one, I
 “ presume, assert; that ’tis an *equal* Por-
 “ tion of our *human* Entertainment.”

Our *main* Distinction is derived, (as I
 will here again observe) from the *Reason*
 with which we are endowed: and therefore
 our peculiar and noblest Pleasures are those
 that are *intellectual*. The Fruition of *sen-
 sible* Good, is, what the *animal* Creation
 have at least an equal, if not a superior
 Portion with us: and therefore, whatever
 enlarged Share the Rich may enjoy of *this*,
 beyond the meanest among the Poor, they
 can have little ground to glory in it, unless
 it be imagined a *grand* Privilege to partake
 of the Pleasures of Beasts. Admitting
 then the utmost in those animal Gratifica-
 tions, that any Sensualist can pretend to;
 what

what mighty Matter can he boast of in being so *wonderfully* privileged? His affluent Fortune may indeed command the greatest Variety of delicious Food that the Earth can furnish. He may also get it cooked to the highest Relish his pampered Palate is capable of. But what can there be in all this, if he exceeds not the Peasant in *Appetite* and *Taste*, as well as in costly Fare? Should the latter find as delighting a Relish in his coarsest Food, as *he* can pretend to in his choicest Viands; his Cost and Cookery in those *rare* Dainties, can give no Advantage that deserves Regard. *One*, who must be owned an unexceptionable Judge in this, hath positively asserted; That the full Soul, or the crammed Stomach, even *loatheth* the purest Honey that drops from the finest Comb: whereas to an *hungry* Soul, or a craving Appetite, even *bitter* Things are sweet. As the Poor have therefore generally a considerable Advantage with respect to *Appetite*, beyond their wealthiest Neighbours; their coarsest Morsels, without the pernicious Fooleries of Art in Cookery, afford them a truer and higher Gratification, than the others usually obtain. And wherein then (as was above observed) doth their boasted Privilege consist? What real Foundation can the wealthy Sensualists have to vaunt above the Peasant,

Peasant, in this *wonderful Instance* of human Felicity!—And let it farther be considered,

SECONDLY, “ That intemperate Gratifications in Food, or Liquor, have generally, if not always, some fatal Effects on the *Minds*, as well as Bodies of those who place their Happiness in them.”

And, as the wealthy are daily solicited, by whatever can tempt their Appetites, to indulge to some Excess; there are but few who steadily reject those alluring Baits, and escape the Poison included in them. Whereupon it may be observed; that those who swim in Plenty are usually hurried down into Luxury and Riots; or, such *Degrees* of Intemperance as impair their Constitutions, and occasion various Diseases, which not only *shorten* the Period of Life, but fill the contracted Space with innumerable painful Maladies.

Moreover, when the Body is repleted with renewed Cramming, the *Mind* also suffers by the Fumes arising from it. *These* naturally spread a darkening Cloud over all its Faculties; and hereby much disable it, if not entirely incapacitate it,
from

from performing its proper Offices. By Excess, particularly in *Drinking*, the Case is very notorious.——In Riots indeed of *this* kind, Mens *Intellects*, many times, are not only *clouded*, but bereft of their rational Powers. And hence ensue so many *deplorable*, as well as *despicable* Effects, as are not easily enumerated. Wherefore, since *Plenty* is usually productive of such direful Fruits, it certainly deserves to be the less regretted by People in different Circumstances.——But I am willing to enlarge yet a little farther, on the usual pernicious Influence of an affluent State of Life; not only with a View to my present Argument, but as it is a Matter of great Importance to many, to be well apprized of it. Accordingly I observe; that 'tis equally productive of these following mischievous Vices, among others that might be mentioned: viz. *Pride*, *Profuseness*, and *Rioting*.

Pride in particular, is so degrading a Vice, and so many ways pernicious, that it deserves to be disdained, and even to be *abhorred*, by all who would behave becoming *rational* Beings. 'Tis however the *common* unhappy Growth of our present imperfect State. It shoots up naturally in every human Breast; unless with particular

lar Care prevented. The *Seed* of it seems to spring from *Weakness*; or want of Judgment: and, being the natural Offspring of a Defect in the Understanding, it may be observed to *take root soonest*; to *thrive best*; and to *grow rankest*, in the *shallowest Ground*. Affluent Circumstances are its principal Manure, and when this is plentifully cast upon thin Soil, (on a shallow Understanding) it cultivates and fattens this pernicious Weed, to an amazing Growth! None therefore are so insufferably haughty; so extravagantly vain; and so insolently overbearing; as weak People usually are when abounding in Wealth. Yea, which is more deserving Notice; and more to be lamented; it often tinctures the *Wise* with such a Spice of Vanity, as induceth *even those*, in too many Instances, to act beneath their Character; and to cast a degrading Stain upon it. Nor can we wonder at this: for there is certainly need of an *uncommon* Weight of Wisdom, to ballast sufficiently those lofty and large Sails, which wide Estates, and a Mass of Treasure, are wont to fasten to Mens *naturally* towering vain Imaginations.—Where this Ballast is wanting, the Vessel, at best, will heel too much if it does not overset, to sail safely amidst the Rocks and Shallows it is every Day exposed to.

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But permit me to enter *yet a little farther*, into the Nature, the Tendency, and very common Effects, of this mean and pernicious Vice. — It manifestly *debaseth* every one in the Degree in which it governs him. For, it always discovers (as was above observed) a Defect in the Understanding; or a conceited use of its Faculties. 'Tis founded on wrong Notions of Things; and operates always wrongly.

To have indeed a just Opinion of our own Abilities, Attainments, and Merit; that is, to conceive *rightly* of ourselves, and our Deserts, can incur no Blame: for whatever is *right* and *true*, is founded in Nature, and is agreeable to the Laws of it; — can never therefore be faulty; but must in *all* Cases be approved of. But whenever our Self-Opinions extend beyond *Realities*; that is, beyond the Abilities we are really endowed with; or beyond the Merit we can justly claim; they so far rise into vain Conceit: and *Conceit* is a *Bubble*, blown up amidst the Froth of Mens groundless Imaginations. *This* therefore can never be a Foundation that is at all to be trusted to. Yet *Pride* erects even all its Pretensions to particular Deference, on so poor a Basis as this. Mere *opinionative* Worth is this airy Fabrick, that hath nothing solid to support it.

it.—*This* is the Rise of this base Principle. So mean is its *Original*! and so much doth it reproach Mens Understandings *this* way.

And all its *Effects*, are as despicable as its Original. Every Discovery of this degrading Vice, shews a want of Judgment, and a wrong Notion of Things. All its Appearances, whether in Countenance, or Gait, Gesture, or Deportment, are either *apish* and *ridiculous*, or *insolent* and *assuming*. All are contrary to the real Nature of Things; or otherwise are a wrong and senseless Application of them. For there cannot be a Foundation for any undeserved or unsuitable Behaviour towards *any* Person, in *whatever* Case.—*Assumed* Superiority, is a Pretension to a Claim that hath no real Ground; or the Word, in the Sense I here use it, would not properly be applied.

Further: The haughty conceited Person betrays also his Weakness and Want of Judgment, in endeavouring to procure Respect and Deference by such wrong Methods, as prevent, or lessen the Regard and Honour he might otherwise have obtained. Pragmatical Appearances of whatever kind, excite in those who observe them, Contempt or Ridicule. Be they never so much
inferior

inferior in Station, or Circumstances, if they are Persons of Understanding, they are led by the other's Fooleries, to disdain, or else deride him, altho' perhaps, *obliged* to pay him outwardly some mock Honour: for 'tis not in the *Power* of People of good Sense, to pay *real* Honour to any, unless they think them deserving it.

And let it farther be considered: that this pitiful Vice is as *pernicious* as 'tis despicable. It darkens the Mind: disturbs its true Repose: and draws on Men from others, such Ill-will, and Ill-treatment, as they would not otherwise have been exposed to. 'Tis the Sport of many, to throw Dirt at the Proud; and to sting them, when they can, with mortifying Rebuffs: by means of which; and their frequent Disappointments in expected Deference; they have little Room for Self-Enjoyment, unless they vainly take Delight in the Cringing and Flattery of interested Dependents; and the external Homage paid them by the lowest Sort of People.

On the whole therefore: as *Wealth* is so productive of Conceit and Haughtiness, that *wise* Possessors seldom this way escape its contagious Influence; and, as *Pride* is so degrading, and so pernicious an Evil as
hath

hath been shewn above : the Consideration of these Things, may very much alleviate the *unavoidable* Discouragements in an opposite State ; and may help much to reconcile the Poor to their contrary Lot, if they are willing to behave as becomes their Circumstances.

Further : SECONDLY, “ *Profuseness* is “ another of those infamous Vices, that “ too frequently attend an over-flowing “ Fortune.”

This *other* baneful Evil hath greedily preyed on wide Estates ; and often at last transferred them, from hereditary Possessors, into the Hands of those whose wiser and better Management enabled them to make a Purchase of 'em.

It must however, in this other Instance, be acknowledged ; that, as there is a Propriety in all Cases when Things are well adjusted, the Wealthy cannot be blamed, when they make only such a Figure in Life, and allow themselves only such a Measure of Expence, as their Substance will support ; provided the Rules of Virtue, and the Precepts of Religion, are no way disregarded. But, so many, and so powerful, are the Ensnarements that ac-

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company an exalted Station, and plentiful Circumstances; that there are but few, excepting the Penurious, who are not, in *some* Degree, prodigally *profuse*. It may therefore frequently be observed; that Extravagance and Waste, have gradually consumed the accumulated Substance of *many Generations*: and then the impoverished besotted Prodigal, is either precipitated into violent Courses to procure a Subsistence; or constrained to creep to some kind Relation for the Supports of Charity.—I will here add: and 'tis lamentable to consider; how the Poor and Distressed are inhumanly banished from the Dwellings of those Spendthrifts, when their Tables are croud-
ed with fawning Parasites, or swinish Bacchanalians, who wretchedly prey on the Vitals of their Estates: and, that their equally *inhuman Servants*, fattened up themselves with riotous Living, should brutishly disregard the Moans and Tears of the *Lazars* at the Gate, whose Hearts would leap, could they share a little with the *Dogs*, in those rich Morsels that are lavishly thrown to them: or, could they be but favoured with Part of that Spoil which is cast on the Dunghill, or consumed in the Fire.—Such fatal Intoxication is very often the Produce of a plentiful Fortune; and such the dire Effects of it in this *other*

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remarkable View.—Wherefore, on this farther Account, the imagined Privilege of the Wealthy, need not be much regretted by those in inferior Stations; nor their mean Circumstances to affect them much; as *these* will not allow them to lavish in like manner the Portion God hath assigned them.

I will touch also briefly on the next mentioned Instance, viz. THIRDLY, “On that *Rioting* and *Excess* which are common Attendants too on an affluent Fortune.”

So strong are the Cravings of our animal Appetites; and so violent they grow, when complied with and indulged; that 'tis difficult even for *Virtue*, to maintain over them a rational and steady Government, when Mens Circumstances are but moderate. And when the Possession of every alluring Object, nicely adapted to every Taste, does strongly solicit, from Day to Day, their full Gratifications; as is daily the Case of those who swim in Plenty: where is that firm Mind, so well established by Wisdom's Counsels, that steadily preserves its *full* Dominion in such trying Circumstances? Too many even of those, whose virtuous Dispositions may have

proved in *general* a sufficient Safeguard, have frequently been overcome by *repeated* Assaults; and hurried on at last into the like Excesses that the Vicious wallow in. And as for the Tribes of dissolute Sensualists, who place their whole Felicity in animal Indulgences; *these* have been the Sport of every Solicitation, and captivated at Pleasure by every tempting Riot.— And, what *dismal Scenes of Malady* have their Luxury and Lewdness presented to *open View*!—besides those *concealed* Agonies, both in Mind and Body, which their sottish Courses have wrought in them.— Multitudes of those Dissolutes have thus *galloped* to the Grave, as if impatient of continuing to the period Nature intended for them: and have also filled up the contracted Space,—the latter Part of it, at least with Diseases and Tortures, which Temperance and Moderation would have rendered them Strangers to. And when their Eyes, *too late*, are opened, by the incurable Griefs they are made to feel;— *Then*, deep Compunction, bitter Remorse, and *all* the dire Attendants of an hopeless State, conclude their besotted Lives.— *These* also are the frequent horrible Effects of a plentiful Fortune! *This* is too commonly, the wretched Event of being placed

ced amidst the Snares of an over-grown Estate.

I do not however suggest, that *any* of those Evils are *naturally* connected with affluent Circumstances; or therefore inseparable from the *highest* Degree of Wealth. But, such is the Vanity and vitious Tendency of our present imperfect Beings; and so many, and so strong, are the Ensnarements attending Riches; that there are but few, as is very apparent, who do *wholly* escape their bewitching Influence.

I am now willing to flatter myself; that what hath been observed concerning *Wealth*, may not only be sufficient, to moderate our Opinion of this generally idolized Good; but to let us see, how little ground it affords for a Complaint against Providence by those in different Circumstances.—But, to render *this* Part of my Argument the more apparent, I think it adviseable, to make also some farther Remarks on the opposite Case of *Poverty*. For some perhaps may suggest, after all that hath been offered:

“ That if it should be admitted, *Wealth*
 “ is not of such Moment to human Fe-
 “ licity as is commonly apprehended: and

“ also, that it is attended with various
 “ ensnaring Circumstances, which gene-
 “ rally prove pernicious: yet, if we cast
 “ our Eyes on the opposite Case of *Pover-*
 “ *ty*, it must certainly appear, as in *this*
 “ View, to be a very desirable and in-
 “ teresting Privilege: and therefore, so far
 “ as those different Circumstances may
 “ be ascribed to Providence, as doubtless
 “ they may in some particular Instances,
 “ altho’ not determinable; they manifestly
 “ occasion such Distinction in Favour of
 “ *Riches* as is not to be accounted for,
 “ should we consider only the *present* Life.”

Now, to obviate such Objections; and
 to strengthen the Observations already
 made, I shall proceed to consider,

SECONDLY, “ What may *rationally* be
 “ supposed in a State of *Poverty*, that can
 “ give any just Occasion to censure divine
 “ Allotments, as in *this* View.”

Poverty, and *Meanness*, with all the
 Phantoms attending them, may appear
 perhaps, in the vain Conceit of those who
 wanton in Wealth and Affluence, like a
 Group of *ghastly Spectres* that *shock* them
 beyond Expression. — But, when well
 examined by unprejudiced *judicious* Per-
 sons,

sons, they are found to have nothing in them in any Degree affrightening. Nor are there any Circumstances attending them, so far as they are *really* a *providential* Assignment, that need to give *Uneasiness*; and much less any Anxiety. Such Depths indeed of Indigence as render Men incapable of procuring, by regular means, the necessary Supports of Life, are a wretched distressful State, which may sometimes depress even a *virtuous* Mind. But this, as I conceive, is a direful Case which Providence assigns to no one, unless it be some way deserved, or *faultily* at least occasioned. The acknowledged *Goodness* of God seems perfectly irreconcilable (as hath been proved before) with such a *personal unmerited* Lot. It may *eventually* happen to some few unhappy Persons: but, wherever this was found, it could not properly be charged as a *personal* Assignment to *those*. The bare *permitting* such woful Events, by admitting the Laws of Nature, which are admirably contrived for Mens general Good, to have their proper Course, is an obvious *very* different Case from a *personal Direction* of them. *This* cannot justly be charged as a real Distinction in the divine Treatment. And should any extraordinary Instance of such Misery, be *really* the Effect of a *providential* Direction, we have sufficient Rea-

son to conclude, as in all other *unavoidable* Evils, that a proper Compensation hath been some way made them; provided they were real Objects of it. But, as I do not apprehend my present Argument concerned in such *very extraordinary* Cases; the Poverty I am treating of, is supposed to be attended with the *Necessaries* of Life. And what could Men find in *those* Circumstances, were it not for their Pride, or Folly, or faulty Dispositions, that deserves to be much regretted?—Let the Case be well examined in the following most material Instances; viz.

“ In respect to the *Labours* the Poor are
 “ subjected to:—their *mean Habitations*:
 “ —their *coarse Fare*: — and their *un-*
 “ *sightly Cloathing*.”

As to the *First* of these, it hath been shewn: that, in the important Article of *Health*, they generally have, by means of their daily *Labour*, an invaluable Privilege beyond the highest of their Superiors, instead of being placed in less desirable Circumstances. — And should any in exalted Stations think meanly of them, on account of those low Offices, and the frequent painful Drudgery to which they are subjected; they would do well to consider; that

that Utility in Life, is undoubtedly the principal praise-worthy Conduct ; and therefore the most *honourable* : and also, that they owe, under God, their own Affluence and Ease to the Labours of these People they so ungratefully despise : for these contribute more to the common Stock of Support and Entertainment, than most of their own Number are even *capable* of doing. The laborious Poor commendably employ their Time and their Abilities, for the common Good of their Species, as well as for their own. Whereas those in higher Stations too frequently squander their valuable Moments in trifling Amusements, or sottish Indolence, if not in more infamous vitious Gratifications. — The imagined *Meanness* of Labour can degrade no Man, provided it turn to some useful Account : nor, can the *lowest* Office in Life appear despicable in any other Eye, than what Pride or Ignorance have strangely obscured. — Let us also touch a little,

SECONDLY, “ On the *Cottages* of the
 “ Poor ; and on the cheap and mean
 “ *Utenfils* wherewith they are commonly,
 “ but scantily supplied.”

And, to set *those* Circumstances in the strongest View, let us consider them as
 compared

compared with the lofty Palaces of the Great; and the richest Furniture which *these* are replenished with.—And what is there in Reality, in Distinctions *thus* occasioned? Wherein consists the mighty Difference, as to all the Purposes of a Dwelling, betwixt the most magnificent Palace of the highest Monarch, with all its pompous Furniture; and the meanest habitable Hut, with only necessary Materials, however coarse or few, to supply their daily Occasions? The *Grandeur* of an Edifice can contribute little to the Gratification of its Inhabitant, either in eating or sleeping: nor will the most splendid Furniture, or the richest and most commodious Utensils, be of greater Advantage, in giving *rational* Entertainment to a rightly disposed Mind, than the *Magnificence* of the Palace. Food and Liquor preserve their Relish as well in the coarsest Vessels of Earth or Wood, if clean and wholesome; as in those of the richest Metal, however formed and embellished. Nor, is a Bed of Down, with all its surrounding Pomp, of greater Service to the End of *Sleeping*; than a Nest of Straw to one that rests as sweetly on this, as the Monarch can *slumber* on the other. The humble healthful Cottager needs nothing that is *showy*, to obtain to as good Advantage the Gratification of his Senses,

Senses, as any of his Superiors may, with all their glittering gaudy Furniture. The *Peasant* indeed is placed, *beyond the Influence* of those fanciful Toys: he matters them not: nor would they enlarge his wonted Entertainments, if he be not tinctured with the like Vanity, were he allowed to use them. Whatever exceeds Usefulness, is either needless, or for Shew. And the *rational* Ends to be proposed in a *Dwelling*, may certainly be reduced to a very small Number. What only serves to gratify Mens Vanity, or to pamper their Appetites, cannot be thus esteemed.

Upon the whole, the Distinction that appears between the Rich and the Poor, in respect to *Habitation*, can afford as little ground for an Objection against Providence, as either of the Instances I have before examined.

There can be little Occasion to add any thing here concerning the *Food* of the Poor; having, as I conceive, sufficiently obviated whatever may be objected under *this* Head. However, as the Sensualists place a great Part of their Happiness in Gratifications of *this* kind; and as too many others, who may not deserve this infamous Character, do rest too much on
this

this low Distinction, it may not be improper to remind *both* these sorts of Persons: that the coarsest Morfel is always delicious to a craving Stomach; whereas, the richest Dainties are tasteless to one that is daily crammed with them. Nor can the unnatural Gust which Sauce and Cookery may force upon the Palate, in any Degree compare, with that exquisite Relish of even the meanest Fare which the Keeness of Hunger produceth.

As therefore the Poor, in this *grand* Point, have generally the Advantage thro' the Circumstances of their Case; there can certainly be little ground for an Objection against Providence as thus considered.— But 'tis needless to enlarge on this.

Let us now briefly reflect, *THIRDLY*,
 “ On that other *wonderful* Distinction in
 “ the Article of *Cloathing*.”

“ And oh! What a *shocking* unsightly
 “ Figure doth the *ragged* Peasant make, in
 “ the Eye of a flaunting gaudy Simpleton!
 “ How uncouth is his Covering! and how
 “ *coarse*, if not *tattered*, do *all* his Gar-
 “ ments appear!”

But,

But, let those who are thus affected at the Meanness of this Figure, consider a little calmly ; what may be those valuable Ends of Cloathing, which contribute any way to Mens *rational* Comfort ; and 'twill soon appear, on a little Inquiry, they may as well be answered by the cheapest Apparel, however unshapely ; as, by the costliest Attire, in the most fashionable Manner prepared. Even a patched Garment of the coarsest *Wool*, may secure as kindly Warmth, and as good a Shelter, as the *richest embroidered Robe*, of whatever Materials composed. Indeed the Glare and Gaudry of the *latter*, may be of some Advantage to the Wearer, in procuring the greater Deference from weak and injudicious People : but, should a low Understanding be known to be encased in a Body decked with the stateliest Apparel, *such* Person will be pitied, instead of being admired, with all his costly Finery : when another perhaps in Rags, if manifestly endowed with superior Abilities, will be more esteemed and honoured by those who perceive the *internal* Difference. — The *Mind* of a Man, which is the principal Standard of his real Worth, wants little Assistance from bodily Ornaments, to procure a due Regard from those whose Esteem is deserving Notice.

Further :

Further : It may every where be observed, that Finery and Fashions, among other admired Trifles, take all their Value, and furnish their low Delights, from the Conceit of the Wearer, and those who gape upon him. So that a *Clown* may be as much lifted up on the coarsest Apparel, if fancying himself fine in respect to those about him ; as a Monarch may, if of the like Size of Understanding, on the richest Robes of State.

One could hardly stoop to those *low* Inquiries, were not these *trifling Things* so much accounted of by a vain injudicious World. Could Men get above the Influence of Pride and Vanity ; and regard chiefly, as might reasonably be expected, *intellectual* Entertainments ; they might soon find, *manlike* Enjoyment which is that alone deserving Regard, may certainly be obtained in a *low* Condition, as well as in a higher : yea, considering the almost *unavoidable* Cares, Disquietudes, and Ensnarements, which usually accompany exalted Fortunes, (I am well persuaded) abundantly *sooner*. Whereupon the greatest Minds of even the *heathen* World, as well as of the Christian, have cast such Contempt on the Blandishments of Wealth, as
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to have chosen *cheerfully* the Retreats of Poverty.

On the whole therefore: as it hath plainly I hope appeared; that even *animal* Gratifications, should these be accounted a mighty Privilege, may be as well obtained in the lower Stations of Life, as in the highest: and as all the other Entertainments of Sense, beside what are *fanciful*, (as all the *showy* kinds undeniably are) do certainly lie in *common* among the several Ranks of Men: and, as the same may be affirmed of *intellectual* Capacities, which are the Fountain and Ground of all *man-like* Enjoyment:—— If all these Observations are rightly founded; (as they appear to me to be)——Wherein then can the wonderful Difference lie, betwixt the Rich and the Poor, in *either* of those Views?—— *Wealth* indeed may be serviceable to *improve* Mens Capacities, (as hath been noted before;) and thereby to increase their intellectual Entertainments, and their social Usefulness; but the want of such Improvement, can neither be a Crime, nor any way prove unhappy, to those who are *providentially* debarred the Privilege. The *natural* Stock of the Poor may turn to as good Account, yea, generally turns to a better

better, than the greatest Cultivations are ordinarily found to do, to those in plentiful Circumstances.

It may here be farther remembered, that when Wealth falls to the Share of weak, or of vitiously disposed People, it turneth most unhappily. In the *first* Sort it makes a most unsightly Mixture; and renders the Possessors of it more conspicuous Objects of Contempt, or Ridicule, than they would have appeared in a lower Station.—In the *other* View, it daily excites and pampers Mens irregular Appetites, and wretchedly makes way for the worst Discoveries of them. But, when *Poverty* and *Folly* meet together; or, when *Indigence* and *Vitiousness*; the one is much concealed by it; and the other is much restrained.

I might point, were it needful, at a great many other Instances, wherein the Odds, if any, doth plainly turn on the Side of Poverty; especially considering, how very few there are who make any Advantage of Wealth; and, what *vast* Numbers are ruined by it. But what already hath been observed may answer, I would hope, my present Purpose.—I would therefore take

take Liberty, to conclude also under *this* Article ; that there is, in Reality, as little room to raise Objections against Providence, on account of Mens different Circumstances as to *Wealth* and *Poverty*, as in either of the Instances before considered : for whatever Difference may be between one and another, in respect to *these* Things, there seems little Ground to impute it to a providential *personal* Assignment with regard to either ; since 'tis generally owing, as is exceeding manifest, either entirely to the *eventual* Course of Things, without any appearing distinct Regard to particular Persons, in a way of Indulgence to some ; or, thro' a want of Kindness to others : or else it may be ascribed to Mens own Conduct, in increasing, or diminishing, the Substance they first possessed. And as for those Distinctions that may more plainly be concluded a *personal* Assignment ; *these* appear, even as *thus* considered, to add so little on the one Hand, to our proper Felicity ; and to have, on the other, so little Influence in occasioning a Diminution of it ; that they are scarcely deserving Notice. But admitting there may be some few *extraordinary* Instances, which may afford some ground for Objections this way ; the unbiassed Equity of the common Parent will lead us, in *such* Cases, to conclude ;

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that one way or another, they are sufficiently compensated, tho' not apparently; and, that the Balance, upon the whole, may be fitly poised. To *prove* the contrary, is what no Person of Understanding will, I believe, attempt. What hath therefore been observed under *this* Head, may suffice, as would I flatter myself, to support the Argument I have undertaken, as it relates to *these* Things. But should any one desire yet farther Satisfaction, I would hope he may find it under the Article of *Honour*, which is next to be considered.

C H A P.

C H A P. X.

“ The Case of Mankind examined
 “ with respect to *Honour*.”

H*onour* in particular, is so enchanting a Good ; and hath such wonderful Influence on human Minds, that we plainly discover an extraordinary Fondness for it, from the first Dawn of Reason, to our latest Prospects in Life.—There have however been some, so surprizingly sottish, as to have sunk below the Influence of this *noble manly* Principle. I thus term it ; because it leads Men, when rightly founded, and rightly operating, to *dignify* their Nature by a truly rational and praise-worthy Conduct. But those who disregard this generally admired Good ; and especially, who despise *deserved* Reproach, and hereupon allow themselves in any villainous, or brutal Practices, may justly be accounted the *Scum* of Humanity ; yea, as a Sort of *Monsters* among our Species ; and therefore not worthy any farther Notice.

The Bulk of Mankind, in every Rank, are naturally so strongly led to the Prospects of Honour ; (that is, of obtaining in their respective Stations, some distinguishing

Regard;) that all their Aims, and all their Attainments, respecting *this* Life, seem chiefly to center in *this*. Mens Value even for *Wealth*, is raised on a View of obtaining by means of it, the more respectful Deference from the World. To what other Purpose do they usually turn the Magnificence of Houses? the Sumptuousness of Furniture? the Gaudery of Attire? the Parade of Equipage? or, even the *Luxury* and *Riots* in which they so often glory? I believe, I may affirm, that *every* external Appearance it enables any to put on, is chiefly intended to obtain this more highly admired Good: yea, all esteemed Distinctions among Men, whether personal or external, are principally rated, in Proportion to their Tendency to procure the World's Regards; and all the Displays that are usually made of them, do mainly center in the same. Wherefore such as are thought to be herein most indulged by providential Kindness, are generally accounted the special Favourites of Heaven.—Whereas those who are placed in such mean Stations, and indigent Circumstances, as cause them to be overlooked and slighted by the World, are imagined to be destitute of the most esteemed Good in Life.

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Had these common Sentiments any real Foundation, there would *bererein* also appear a most surprising Inequality in Divine Allotments, so far as it might be attributed to a *providential* Direction of Things. But I hope to make it evident, there is as little ground for any Objection on this Head, as in either of the Instances already examined. In proceeding therefore on *this* Part of my Inquiry, I shall endeavour to represent the true Notion of *Honour*: and consider on what ground it is usually paid to any one. And afterward shew; in what respect, and how far, this highly esteemed Good doth properly conduce to human Felicity; and what Distinction it really makes in it.

As to the *First* of these proposed Things:
 “ HONOUR, considered in general, consists,
 “ (as was intimated above) in the Respect
 “ or Deference that is paid to any one, on
 “ account of some Excellency, either natural,
 “ or acquired, wherein he is apprehended to be *distinguished* among our
 “ Species.”

I do thus express it; because nothing that is *common*, however valuable in itself, is a proper ground of Honour. Even our *Reason*, altho’ so noble and useful a Capacity; and exalting Men so high above the

Animal Creation ; makes no Distinction in our *Species*, unless possessed, or improved, in some *distinguishing* Measure : considered in general, 'tis a *common* Privilege. The same may be observed, with respect to any engaging Dispositions ; commendable Actions ; or laudable Acquirements, of *whatever* kind.

And let it farther be remembered ; that the observed Eminency, or the esteemed Excellencies, which are the ground of Honour ; are, either natural, or acquired. And each of these may be farther distinguished into *bodily*, *intellectual*, and *external* : for on each of those Accounts is Honour commonly paid to Men.—It may be of use to consider these Things distinctly ; and therefore I hope to be indulged in it ; altho' it may lead me into such Enlargement as may appear to some disagreeable.

I understand by *natural* Advantages, those that are the Fruits of *Birth*, whether personal, or external.—*Acquired* Distinctions ; which are those only (as will be shewn hereafter) that can lay a Foundation for *rational* Deference, and therefore for *rational* Comfort to the Persons who obtain it, may be found to arise from a *laudable Improvement* of one or other of the Advan-

Advantages above pointed at; and not merely from being *possessed* of them.—The most valuable of *acquired* Distinctions, are those that are *intellectual*. And *these* chiefly arise from a laudable Improvement of our Capacities for *Knowledge*; either in a way of Literature; or of some serviceable Art; or social Office: or otherwise, (which is more worthy of Esteem) from *cultivating and exerting beneficent Dispositions, and virtuous Principles*.

External acquired Distinctions that commend to Honour, are usually obtained by a proper Exercise of intellectual and bodily Capacities: namely, an Increase of Substance; Advancement in Station, Office, &c. I may add; and in gaining to some Advantage, a prevailing Influence over the Tempers and Conduct of others.

I have thought it adviseable to point out those Particulars, in distinguishing on the Grounds of Honour, in order to obtain a more clear and distinct View of what is generally understood by it; and to prepare the way the better for what will farther be observed under this Head, in Support of my main Argument.—Let us now consider then,

SECONDLY, " Which way Honour conduceth to human Felicity : and what Distinction it may be supposed to make in it."

And here I would first observe : that as Honour is generally accounted our principal external Good ; and is accordingly more commonly and more earnestly pursued, than any other ; 'tis that wherein Men do most enjoy themselves as *rational* Beings. As we are indeed compounded of an *animal* Nature as well as *rational*, we are frequently delighted in *sensible* Gratifications, as well as in Entertainments that immediately affect our Minds. But no Person of Understanding can be supposed to account his animal Gratifications, as the principal ground of his proper Felicity.

" But which way, it may be asked, doth Honour conduce to human Felicity ?" The best Account I can give of it is this. — It encourageth and feeds that pleasing Opinion we naturally entertain of ourselves, and our Conduct ; or, in one Word, of our own *Merit* : and from this if *rightly founded*, ariseth, as I conceive, the truest and highest Enjoyment of our present Being, considered as *rational* Creatures.

—I say, which we are naturally led to entertain of *ourselves*, and our *Conduct*: for this is a Principle which the Author of our Natures seems to have inserted in us from the kindest Views. It is not only needful to incite us to act worthy of the Reason we are endowed with; (on doing which our proper Happiness depends) but, hath the strongest Influence this way, of any Inducement of *this* Life that we ordinarily meet with. Wherefore, when any Persons have cast off all Regard to their own Merit, they wholly give themselves up to an *Animal* Conduct, and sink among the Beasts. But those, on the other Hand, who are most influenced by this laudable Principle, are hereby led to be most careful of behaving as they ought; *i. e.* to demean themselves becoming their rational Nature, and their State of Being, *in a due Regard to the Author of both*. Whereupon they obtain to best Advantage the Happiness they are rendered capable of. For, as may be here remembered, 'tis, in the very Nature of Things, impossible to be happy any other way, than by a proper Exercise of our Capacities for Happiness; since our Powers of tasting Good, and the respective Goods provided for us, are so admirably suited to each other, that neither of them
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can answer their End, but when *rightly applied*. So that a rational Being can no other way attain his proper Felicity, (that is, what becomes him as such,) than, by a regular or right Exercise of his rational Powers on Goods corresponding with them.

But to return to what I first observed. The Attainment of Honour, is, as I conceive, instrumental to our Happiness, as it countenanceth and feeds our natural fond Opinion of ourselves and our Conduct. For *Self-Pleasedness* may be found the *immediate* principal Foundation of most, if not of *all*, our *intellectual* Pleasures: perhaps, may also *ultimately* be the Ground of all that are properly such. Most certain it is; we are most delighted as *rational* Creatures, when we most approve of our own Conduct. And, the Reason I take to be, —because we are then *best pleased with ourselves*. Every other intellectual Entertainment doth seem to center at last in *this*. Whereupon *Self-Pleasedness*, may I think be accounted the *immediate* prime Fountain of our *present* Felicity: I may venture perhaps to add; and, of our *future* too.

The *contrary* to this, is undeniably the Occasion of the keenest Misery. Indeed, nothing

nothing can affect a Man so much, either with Pain, or Pleasure, as what ariseth from *himself*: I mean, from the Working of his own Mind. As for *bodily* Pains and Pleasures; *these* are light and inconsiderable, in comparison of those which immediately affect the *Spirit*. The latter are adapted to the Constitution of the Soul; and closely impress it with their proper Influence; as there is no Medium to intercept, or diminish it. Whereas all Impressions from without, and those also that are bodily, affect only at *second Hand*, as I chuse to express it: nor can they possibly reach the Soul's perceptive Powers, in like Manner, or in the same Degree, as those which proceed from its own Operations. When a Person, on any Occasion, is set against himself, he will work his Resentment more closely and keenly, than an external Enemy is *capable* of doing.—Nor is this to be wondered at; since there is always some room to obtain Shelter against a *foreign* Foe;—either some Protection, or otherwise some Support:—but *where can a Man flee from the Pursuits of his own Spirit?* or what Protection can he get against the piercing Arrows of his own exasperated Soul? or what *Relief*, under the dreadful Anguish such ghastly Wounds create him?

him?—In *this most desperate Case*, he is compelled to stand fair, as an open and easy Mark: and to drench in all the Venom which every Dart is attended with. No other Refuge can he find; no other Remedy can he obtain; than by sinking below his Being! *this direful only Resort!* —if *this* may be effected: —no other Refuge, or Remedy; than by stupifying his Mind with some sottish Intoxications, which may perhaps afford him some little momentary Respite. But which way can even *this* be possibly obtained in an *unembodied* State? when the Soul is set free from whatever may clog its Operations, or cloud its Faculties? when it will have full Power to vent, as I may speak, its utmost Rage, in all the piercing Reflections of which it is rendered capable.

I have made this Excursion, with a View to the *direful* Case of those wretched Mortals who are herein concerned; as hoping it may incite some of them, should this fall into *such* Hands, to take some due Care to live in Peace with their own Minds; since 'tis manifestly impossible they can otherwise obtain any *manlike* Enjoyment of their *present* Existence, should they look no farther, in whatever Circumstances they

they may be placed : or yet to escape, if thoughtful, the most *penetrating Evils* of Life *.——But I return to what I was aiming at.——

As we cannot conceive of a State of greater Misery, than to lie exposed to the severest Rebukes of our own Minds ; or, in other Words,—than to be *enraged* against ourselves : so, is there not found on the other Hand, a more desirable Source of Pleasure, than is that which results from the *well-grounded* Consciousness of our own Merit ; that is, (as was intimated above) of our behaving agreeably to our rational Nature, and the Things respecting us ; whereby we fulfil the *Creator's Will* in a right Improvement of his Favours. This, I conceive, is the only *right* way in which all our laudable Dispositions, Attainments, and Actions, administer to our Happiness. In a Word, they all seem to center in *Self-Approbation*, and consequent *Self-Pleased-*

* I would hope I may be excused in such practical Excursions as my Argument hath led me to ; since my principal Aim in this Attempt, was, to render it of some Service to *Mens Conduct* in Life : for, whatever Entertainment it may afford in Speculation, if no way conducive to *beneficial Practice*, it would signify but little, or be scarcely deserving Notice.

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ness; and Self-Approbation ariseth from a delighting Consciousness of having behaved well.—From whence also it may be inferred: that no Person can *rationaly* enjoy himself in a contrary Conduct.

But perhaps it may be said: “ That, allowing Self-Approbation, and consequent Self-Pleasedness, to be the immediate *principal* Fountain of our present Felicity; it is not however, the *only* Source of it considering ourselves as *Rationals*: for, a *mere social Disposition*, as it leads us to take Pleasure in our fellow Creatures Good, altho’ no way instrumental in it, doth also much contribute to our personal Happiness.”

To this I reply:—That *mere* natural Dispositions, are no other than natural *Instincts*: and whatever Pleasure results from Instinct, is as evidently *animal* Pleasures, as is that which is merely *sensible*. As for *rational* Satisfaction, if we have any such in the Knowledge of another’s Happiness; *this* must proceed from *rational Benevolence*; that is, from a Principle of Good-Will that is *cherished* and *improved*: otherwise, even *this* Principle, altho’ the noblest that is inserted in our Nature, cannot properly be *virtuous*; or therefore be the ground

ground of any personal *Merit*, or of any Satisfaction that is properly *rational*. But the *cultivating* and *exerting* this amiable Principle, or any *other* useful one, is a rational commendable Act, which lays a good Foundation for Self-Esteem, and consequent rational Comfort. Indeed *all* the Pleasures we enjoy as *rational* Beings, must one way or another, result (as was intimated above) from the *Exercise* of *Reason*: and Reason can be exercised no other way commendably, than in Acts that are agreeable to the Nature and Reasons of Things; or, in *revolving* such Acts.

But, if this way of reasoning be thought too intricate to confirm the Argument here intended; viz. That the Honour we receive from others conduceth to our Happiness, by countenancing and feeding our good Opinion of ourselves; I shall endeavour to represent it in another View: as thus:—Let it also be considered; that when we receive Honour from another, either for such Privileges as we ourselves set no Value upon; or else for supposed Advantages which we know we are not possessed of; such Honour as this, tho' it may humour a little our Vanity, can afford no *rational* Comfort; because it neither
heightens

heightens nor countenanceth *Self-Esteem*. It rather occasions Pain in sensible Minds, as it tacitly upbraids us with the want of those Advantages we are supposed to be possessed of; or at least induceth us to reflect the sooner on our own Deficiency; and so *diminisheth* Self-Esteem, instead of heightening it. It hath certainly a Tendency to work in this manner upon Persons of Understanding, how little soever it may affect the Weak and Vain-glorious.

Let us suppose a Man applauded as a *noble Patriot*, who is conscious at the same time, he is either a Traytor to his Country's Interests; or else has been influenced only by selfish and base Ends, in whatever Zeal he may have shewn in its Concerns: In *such* a supposed Case, the Peoples mistaken Honours must sting him, one would think, with inward keen Reproaches for the Treachery he is conscious of, instead of giving him the Pleasure which a *real* Patriot would obtain. Surely, if he be not sunk below the Interest of Reason, their loud Acclamations to his Praise, must fill him with Confusion; as well knowing he is deserving their Contempt, if not their Abhorrence.

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In like manner we may conclude; that every Appearance of *friendly* Respect in private Life, is a cutting Rebuke to a false-hearted secret Enemy, who knows he is the *Reverse* to what he is taken to be by the deluded Person, who daily perhaps follows him with Marks of his Esteem, and the Fruits of his Favour.

Indeed it is impossible, that mistaken Honours of whatever kind, I mean, such as the Persons they may be paid to, know to be undeserved, can administer *rational* Comfort, if they may not occasion *Pain*: for the very ground of taking Pleasure in them, is in such Case wanting. They can no way encourage *Self-Esteem*; since they are no Evidences to *such* of any personal Merit. They rather mind them of their *Defects*, or, of a contrary criminal Conduct.

It being then undeniable, that *groundless* Honours are so far from giving Pleasure, to those who know they are groundless, that they rather occasion Pain; we may I think from hence infer, that when Honour furnisheth Delight, (I mean such Delight as is *rational*) it is usually, if not always effected, by cherishing Mens plea-

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sing Opinion of their personal Merit; this being the immediate prime Fountain of all our intellectual Pleasures.

Let this suffice in pointing out the *manner* in which Honour is instrumental to human Felicity. And therefore I shall now proceed to consider,

SECONDLY, "What Distinction it may make in it between Man and Man."

And here we may find, if we carefully examine it, "That the Honour which is "worthy Regard, is, what the meanest "Peasant may *deserve*, if not *obtain*, as "much as the highest Potentate." And the bare Consciousness of *deserving* Honour, may lay as good Foundation for the Pleasures of *this* sort, when it is not actually obtained, as if it were. For, the receiving Honour from even the best Judge of real Merit, can add (as hath been shewn) no other way to Mens *rational* Comfort, than by encouraging and confirming a pleasing Opinion of their having *deserved* it; or, of their being distinguished by Attainments or Actions that are accounted laudable; this being (as was observed above) the immediate principal ground

ground of our Self-Enjoyment.—Now, supposing we are as fully persuaded of our real Merit, without the confirming Testimony of others, as we might be, had we obtained such Testimony; *then* may the Pleasure which results from this Persuasion, be the same in *one* Case, as 'tis found in the other. Nor is this an idle groundless Supposition, but such as may be well admitted. 'Tis true, a Person may be capacitated for more enlarged Usefulness, by obtaining from the World the Honour he may deserve; and *this* way may enlarge his own Felicity, if *improving* such Advantage. But, when our not being as serviceable as our Capacities enable us, and as we ardently desire to be, cannot be charged as our Fault; the *Disposition* alone, when *cherished*, is as solid a Foundation for personal Esteem, and for consequent Self-Pleasedness, as our actual most enlarged Usefulness would have been. However, as *this* Article of *Honour*, is of special Consideration in the Argument I have undertaken; and as it therefore deserves to be particularly attended to; I presume I may be allowed to expatiate a little farther, in endeavouring to illustrate what I here aim at. Accordingly I shall examine more particularly,

FIRST, " What that sort of Honour
 " may be which deserves Regard ; or,
 " which lays a Foundation for *rational*
 " Self-Pleasedness."

SECONDLY, " Shall shew, that every
 " *other* sort of Honour, how much soever
 " it may delight vain-glorious and weak
 " People, deserves little Regard ; nor
 " therefore to be regretted by those, whose
 " Station and Circumstances prevent their
 " obtaining it."

And THIRDLY, I shall endeavour to
 prove, " That the meanest Peasant may
 " lay as good Foundation for Esteem and
 " Deference, and thereupon may obtain
 " as much Satisfaction *this* way, as the
 " highest Monarch may."

If these Things can be made appear, it
 must then be acknowledged ; that the
 poorest Mortal hath no real ground to re-
 gret his Condition, on the Account of
Honour ; or, in *this* View, to complain of
 the Circumstances allotted him, how much
 soever he may be slighted or *despised* by any
 of his Superiors.—Let us carefully ex-
 amine then what is here proposed : and, to
 to this End consider,

FIRST

FIRST, " What is that sort of Honour
 " which deserves *Regard*; or, which lays
 " a Foundation for *rational* Self-Pleased-
 " ness."

Now, if we inquire carefully into *this*, it will appear; that the only Respect and Deference which is deserving Notice, or, which lays a Foundation for *rational* Self-Pleasedness, is that we may obtain from Persons whose Opinion of Merit may be *confided* in; and shewn also by *those*, for such laudable Distinctions as the honoured Person is *himself* conscious of. For, whatever Honour may be paid by injudicious People, deserves no other Notice, than as it may encourage benevolent Dispositions, and add perhaps some Weight to social Usefulness; but cannot affect Mens *rational* Opinion of their own Merit. Weak People shoot their Praises at random, not being competent Judges of real Worth: and therefore generally conceive their honourable Sentiments of others, on account of some low Distinctions that confer no *Merit*; or otherwise, of such imagined Advantages as they are not possessed of. Such random Honour may please Mens Vanity; but cannot contribute to their *rational* Comfort, any other way than was above

suggested.—Wherefore I conclude ; that the only Honour which deserves Regard, must be paid, as I said, by Persons who are *competent Judges of real Merit*: and paid also by *those*, for such laudable Distinctions as the honoured Person is himself *conscious* of. For as the wisest Men are liable to Mistake ; and as Favour and Affection have great Influence in biasing our Sentiments ; there may sometimes be little room to be much delighted with the Honours that are paid by the most Judicious : nor can the honoured Person always depend on the outward Deference that *any* one may pay him.

But, to obtain yet a clearer Notion of the Honour that may contribute to rational Happiness ; or, to the right Enjoyment of our present State ; it may be proper to distinguish between *intrinsic Worth*, and *real Merit*. For, *subjective* Worth, (as I chuse to express it) I mean, our being *naturally* endowed with valuable Capacities, or with laudable Dispositions, cannot properly be said to produce *Merit*. The pure Gifts of Nature can have nothing in them *personally* Praise-worthy. *Merit*, properly speaking, implies, as I conceive, such *personal* Worth as is stamped with *Virtue*:
that

that is, which receives its proper Value from a *commendable Improvement* of such useful Powers as Nature may have bestowed on us. For whatever entitles us to Praise, must not only be valuable in its own Nature, but likewise in some proper Sense, must be *our own*. The *intrinsic* Worth of every valuable Capacity, or Praise-worthy Disposition, belongs properly to him from whom it was derived: and so must the Honour which this entitles to. 'Tis the *Exercise* alone of our natural Capacities, Dispositions, or Talents, that can, in any proper Sense, be said to be *our own*; and therefore we can only have a proper Claim to the Fruits that are produced by a *right Improvement* of them. For it ought always to be remembered; that the Author of our Being hath not *absolutely* conferred on us, any one Capacity or Power we are possessed of. We are entrusted only as Stewards or Factors, with our respective Talents. And the only praise-worthy Part which entitles us to Honour, is a faithful Execution of the Trust committed to us, of whatever kind it be. *This* alone can be a proper ground, either of *Self-Approbation*, or of *rational Esteem* from others. Wherefore, on the whole, the Advantages of any kind which entitle

Men to Honour, or which really raise them to *laudable* Distinction, are those only that are *regularly acquired*; not those that are merely the Gifts of Nature: I say, *regularly* acquired; because, no irregular or faulty Methods of obtaining any sort of Good, can gain a *Property* in it: nor can such Acquirement, how laboriously soever pursued, recommend to rational Deference; since every ones Reason, who discerns the Nature of it, must *reproach* the Person who is thus advanced, on account of the faulty means, or manner, by which it was effected.

If natural Endowments then, however valuable, lay no Foundation for *rational* Deference to any one, because they are no Evidences of real Merit; *much* less surely can *external Privileges* lay any such Foundation; these being of far less Account than the former: nor are they so much our own. Indeed, Wealth, and Titles, and all the Pomp and external Goods attending them, are of so little Moment to *personal rational* Happiness, that they would not deserve in this Inquiry, to be at all mentioned, if the Folly and Vanity of Men did not set so high a Value upon them. For what are they at best, if compared

pared with but *bodily* Advantages? and how *vastly* short of *intellectual*! In respect especially to the latter, they are but as a *Bauble*; a tinsel Toy; scarcely deserving Notice.

Permit me here to observe: that the principal Acquirements which entitle Men to Honour as before explained, are those which have respect to *social* Benefits; *these* being the principal ground of *rational* Esteem from others, and of the consequent Pleasure derived from it.

There is no room to object; that we were rather chiefly formed to bring Honour to the *Deity*: for *social* Utility is the principal way of doing it. Even our *Acts of Devotion* are, when *rationally* performed, chiefly aimed, and improved *this* way. For 'tis exceeding evident, that the higher Regard we pay to God; and the more Wisdom we obtain from him; the more enlarged Affection and Favour shall we manifest to our fellow-Men; which is undoubtedly the most honourable Part we are capable of acting; and the principal Source of rational Delight; as *this* is a *special* Evidence of our being the Children of God.

The

The Sum of what I have been observing is this : that there are no Distinctions among Men which really set them superior, one to another, in a way of *Praise* ; or, which lay a Foundation for *rational* Deference from others, or for Self-Approbation, and consequent Self-Pleasedness, but those *laudably acquired* ; as there are none but *these* that are really meritorious, or that evidence *personal* Worth. And the principal of *those* Advantages, are, *acquired useful Knowledge* ; and especially, *cultivated social Dispositions*.——I proceed to prove,

SECONDLY, “ That every other sort of
 “ Honour, how much soever it may de-
 “ light vain-glorious and weak People,
 “ deserves little Regard ; nor therefore to
 “ be regretted by those whose Stations and
 “ Circumstances may prevent their obtain-
 “ ing it.

No Advantages of Birth ; no pompous admired Titles ; no Extent of Estate ; nor any degree of Wealth ; can any way of *themselves*, advance any one's *Merit* ; or render him *really* honourable. Could the Possessors be separated from these foreign Trappings, as many of them have been ; *then* would it in *Fact* appear, they were not

not honoured on their *own* Account, unless deserving it for *personal Merit* ; but purely on account of their outward Garnishing : that 'twas only the Glare of their pompous *Titles*, which attracted the Observation, and procured the Deference of the cringing Crowd. And, if any who glittered in this showy Gaudery were known to be *personally* base, or mean, thro' Vitiousness, or Folly, they might be well assured, they were inwardly despised, at the very Time they were externally cringed to.—“ In-
 “ deed it is impossible to pay *real* Honour
 “ to another, unless he be apprehended to
 “ be really deserving it.”

When any one therefore is honoured for his high Birth, his exalted Station, or his Bulk of Riches ; and *for these things only* : the Honour which is thus shewn him, is no other than a *Pageantry*, respecting the Person himself. He is considered only as a Sort of *Image*, which represents the Deity to which such Honour was paid. He was bowed to, and praised, thro' the *other's* Recommendations ; but not *personally* on his *own* Account. The Man who praiseth, or boweth to another, on account only of his external Privileges, must, if not influenced by the Laws of Decency,

Decency, (which ought indeed *always* to be duly regarded) be either a Fool, or a Self-ended Flatterer : since these Things of themselves, convey not (as was observed) any real Merit. And the Homage paid by *Parasites*, is paid in Reality to their *own Self-Ends* : that is, to *themselves* : and more immediately, to the worshipful *Titles, Riches, or Advantages*, thro' whose Assistance they hope for the Favour aimed at : — Not to the *Image* who represents those Deities : for *he* is accounted, only as a *Figure* that prompts their Devotion ; and a sort of Channel that conveys to them the proposed Purchase of it.

Perhaps this manner of representing those Matters may appear fanciful : but I have chosen to set them forth in this ludicrous View, to raise in those concerned, the greater Contempt of such *mock Honours*, as they have Reason to conceive, are either *ignorantly* or *flatteringly* paid them : And to induce those who are desirous of Honour, to endeavour to be possessed of such valuable Distinctions, as may lay a Foundation for what may deserve their Notice.

But perhaps it may be said, “ That
 “ Distinctions in *Birth*, in *Titles*, and in
 “ Sub-

“ *Substance* too deserve a proper Regard ;
 “ and in some sort, do *really* set Men su-
 “ perior to each other : and, that such
 “ Superiority is not only of great Advan-
 “ tage to Communities, but conduceth
 “ also to *every ones* particular Interests.”

This will not be denied : but I take it
 to be foreign to my present Argument ;
 or to affect it but very little.—That dif-
 ferent Stations and Circumstances in Life,
 are highly conducive to the general Wel-
 fare of Mankind ; and of mutual Advan-
 tage to the several Orders among Men,
 hath been acknowledged before : and, that
 proper Honours are due to Titles, and
 Offices, and to every kind of external
 Superiority, hath been also suggested ;
 and the Reason of it pointed at.—But
 which way are those Honours directly in-
 strumental to *personal* Felicity ? How are
 Superiors made more happy by them ? A
Sovereign, a Magistrate, and *all* Persons
 of Distinction, can take no other *rational*
 Satisfaction in the Honours paid them on
 such *relative* Accounts, than as they are
 conducive to the Welfare of their Inferiors ;
 or, as they render their Influence the more
 extensive in promoting their Good. In
this View, indeed, or, on *this* Account,
 such

such Honours may afford even *enlarged* Comfort: but this Comfort (if *rational*) ariseth not from the Deference paid them as Superiors in *Birth*, or *Title*, or *Office*; but from an inward Consciousness of their own *Merit*. 'Tis, properly speaking, the Fruit of their *Virtue*;——not the Product of the external Honours paid them: for these are Matters of *Form*; and sometimes no better than perfect Mockery: perhaps, are always so, when the *Mind* of him who pays it, doth not in Reality join in it.——What Ground or Reason can there be therefore, to be lifted up on such outward *Formalities*? and yet how few are they, in *no* Degree delighted with such airy Shadows? The Imperfection of our Understanding doth rarely appear as conspicuous in any other View, as in this.

On the whole, I take it to be exceedingly evident; that 'tis only apprehended *Virtue*, or *laudable Attainments* of one kind or another, and a proper *Exercise* of them, that are the real Ground of all *rational* Deference: and therefore, that the Honours which are paid on any other account, are either merely external, or paid by Persons who are no Judges of what is really honourable;——in either of which Cases they

they deserve little Regard; nor need they be regretted by those who enjoy them not.

I proceed now to what was next proposed under this Article: viz. to prove, **THIRDLY**, " That the meanest *Peasant* " may lay as good Foundation for Respect " and Deference, and thereupon obtain " as much Satisfaction *this* way, as the " highest *Monarch* may."

I express myself in this manner, to obviate some Objections which some may raise on *this* Point.—I do not suppose, that the Peasant may obtain, whatever his Virtue, or personal Merit may be, the like Regard and Deference as a Prince: for the Obscurity of his Station, and the ordinary Neglects attending it, may inevitably perhaps prevent this; since the latter stands on such advanced Ground, and is also placed in such a Point of Light, that all *his* Accomplishments and praise-worthy Actions appear to greatest Advantage; and thereupon procure a proportioned superior Notice.—But let it be remembered; that external Circumstances neither add to, nor diminish, *Mens personal* Merit; nor therefore affect in Reality the *Ground* of Honour, whatever Difference they may occasion

tion in the actual obtaining it. " A Person
 " may be as truly *honourable*, and as much
 " deserving Respect and Deference, when
 " *most neglected*, as when *most regarded*;
 " and it may be, a great deal more, if
 " rightly improving the Neglect." In the
Circumstances of his Case he is not con-
 cerned, when they may not be attributed
 to his Conduct. *These* may prevent his
obtaining Honour; but need not prevent
 the Satisfaction of *deserving* it: for this
 ariseth from *himself*, supposing it be *ratio-*
nal; and depends no other way on the
 Notice and Esteem of others, than as such
 Notice and Esteem may enlarge his *Useful-*
ness, or afford him an Opportunity of im-
 proving his serviceable Talents to more
 Advantage. On *those* Accounts indeed, he
 may rationally *desire* it; but does not really
want it for his own particular Comfort:
 for this results, as hath been shewn, from
 the *pleasing Consciousness of his own Merit*.
This is the immediate Fountain from
 whence it springs, and flows. *Strictly*
speaking, *Nothing* from without gives any
 sort of Pleasure. Every Entertainment,
 and every Gratification, is derived from
within, by a proper Exercise of our natu-
 ral Powers on the respective Objects occa-
 sioning it. External Objects do but excite
 those

those percipient Powers, and cause them to exert themselves various ways, in giving those pleasing Sensations, and agreeable Apprehensions, wherein we find ourselves so variously delighted.—Of this, even the common Experience of Mankind, on the *opposite* Side, may sufficiently convince us. For, when our Minds, or *Bodies*, are indisposed to take Pleasure in what we were wont to be delighted in; outward Objects are of no Significancy.

I infer therefore from the whole: “ That
 “ *actual* Honour is not always necessary to
 “ enjoy the *Delights* of Honour. So that
 “ *this* Part of Felicity may certainly be
 “ obtained, by a *well-grounded* Self-Per-
 “ suasion of being in the Number of the
 “ Honourable.” ’Tis true, Men are generally exceeding fond of displaying before others their apprehended Worth, in order to obtain that distinguishing Deference they think they deserve: but, were the Matter well examined in even the Light before given, it would plainly appear, there is no *rational* Satisfaction to be obtained in all the Tokens of Honour we may receive from the completest Judges of Merit, unless *we ourselves* are persuaded we are some way or other *deserving* them.

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Should

Should our Minds reproach us at the Time we are thus honoured, as being the Reverse to what we are taken to be; it would rather give us *Pain*, as was observed before, than administer *rational* Pleasure. And is it not as plain, on the *other Side*, that altho' we may be neglected, or even *despised* by all about us; yet, supposing we can approve of our manner of Life, and can honestly appeal to our own Minds, that we have carefully endeavoured to behave ourselves honourably; there is hereupon Ground to entertain of ourselves as favourable Sentiments, and to rejoice in the Consciousness of our real Merit, as if we had been applauded by the whole World. Outward Circumstances can neither affect Mens Knowledge of themselves; nor abate, or heighten, their personal Worth. —And no one will deny, that the meanest Mortal is as *capable* of being endowed with the Gifts of Nature; and also of improving them in as laudable a manner, altho' not of turning them to as much Account, as the highest Monarch is. The Peasant may be as virtuous, and therefore as truly honourable, in the lowest Improvement of the Talents he is intrusted with, as the other may in the highest; provided his Endeavours are equally praiseworthy.

worthy. He may not want a laudable *Disposition*; but has not an *Ability*, to be as great a Blessing to the World as the other's Circumstances enable *him* to be. Were he as *capable*, as he is *willing*, to benefit his fellow-Creatures; *no* distressed, or afflicted Object, should want some suitable Relief: nor any oppressive or fraudulent Criminal escape his deserved Punishment. No Violences or Wrongs, no Injustice or Knavery, nor any Sort of ill Behaviour between Man and Man, should so far as his Power reached, be suffered to be daringly practised.

This *generous raised Character*, is as likely to be found in the meanest Cottage, as in the stateliest Palace upon the Earth. There is certainly as proper Room for it in the most contracted Sphere, as in the most extended.—And so is there as to *personal* Merit, as well as *social*. The Peasant may be endowed with as good Understanding as a Prince: and may also cultivate laudable Dispositions with as much Virtue.—He may (*e. g.*) be as *chaste*, as *temperate*, and as *sincere* as the other. He may as punctually fulfil his respective Engagements; and be as truly conscientious in his Words, and Ways:—“ As pious

“ a Worshipper of God ; and as careful
 “ and constant in pleasing him :—And
 “ therefore, as *great a Favourite.*”——
 Surely, such a Character as this, cannot be
 supposed to be confined to gilded Roofs and
 pompous Dwellings ; but is as likely to
 adorn the Cottage of a Beggar, altho’ per-
 haps concealed in it, as to blaze in mag-
 nificent Edifices. And, where *Virtue* is
 the same ; and as laudably exercised ;——
 what *real* Obstacle can there be, to prevent
 the Delights accompanying it ? And where
 then can be the Difference betwixt the
 honourable *Peasant*, and the honourable
Prince, as to *personal rational* Entertain-
 ment in the Rewards of Honour ? *

If any may desire yet farther Satisfaction
 on this *grand Article*, I would flatter myself,

* The dressing a Sentiment in different Garbs,
 may obtain, I would hope, the Reader’s Indul-
 gence, in respect to its Repetition ; and may ena-
 ble him to form a more agreeable Idea of it, by
 taking from each Dress what is most acceptable to
 him ; and then placing it before his Mind in the
 View that pleaseth him most.—I will add ; to ob-
 viate, in some Measure, the unregarded Snarls of
 ill-natured Critics ; that to repeat a Position, even
 frequently ; if not impertinently done ; but on
 different Occasions, and to a different Purpose ;
 will by no means offend a generous and candid
 Reader, nor need to *such* an Apology.

they

they may obtain it, by reviewing carefully the Observations on the preceding Head.

—With this I shall conclude the argumentative Part of the Discourse I have undertaken: and, if I have failed of answering the Readers Expectations, I would hope it will be considered; that the Subject I have been handling is abstruse and difficult: and, that I lie under the Prejudice of presuming to controvert the established common Sentiment: wherefore I was obliged to strike out an untraced Path, in almost every Step I have taken.—These Considerations, together with that honest Aim which may plainly appear thro' the whole Attempt, may obtain, I would hope, a favourable Allowance, if not some kind Acceptance, from the *Generous*, and *Candid*: and the Opinions and Censures of the Injudicious, and Self-interested, will give me little Concern.

I shall now close this highly interesting Subject, with a few Corollaries; in order to render it the more useful and instructive, for my *principal* Aim has been to promote the Exercise of *Virtue* and PIETY: and therefore to represent the SUPREME BEING in a just and amiable View, as apprehending this the most conducive Method I

could take for it. Accordingly, I have endeavoured to prove ; that *all* the divine Appointments to the Creatures in general, in this earthly System ; and more especially to *Mankind*, have not only been as impartial, but every way as *indulgent*, as the respective Natures given them, and the Constitution of Things relating to them, would properly admit. Wherefore, tho' we cannot dive so far into the Counsels of God, as to discern perfectly the Ground, or Reasons, of any *one* Appointment ; yet what hath been suggested in the preceding Discourse, may be sufficient to satisfy unprejudiced Persons, who will attentively consider it ; that the various Orders in which the Creatures stand ; the several Powers and Capacities conferred on them ; and the different Circumstances *providentially* occasioned by the present Constitution of Things ; do manifest such Contrivance, as is not only unexceptionable, but AMAZINGLY KIND TO ALL ; and deserving the *highest Praise*.

COROLLARIES.

From this Account of those Matters, I infer,——FIRST, “ That surely then, the
 “ Distributions of Providence with respect
 “ particularly to *Mankind*, cannot have
 “ given

“ given any just Ground for those wild
 “ Conceits, and arrogant presumptuous
 “ Cavils, which many have run into by
 “ means of 'em.”

The Defect in such Cases, is chargeable on *themselves*, and not on the ways of God. It may sufficiently appear, from what hath been observed ; that 'twas their own want of Understanding ; and not a want of Skill, or of *kind Intention*, in the grand Contriver of all Things, which caused the Works of Creation, and the Directions of Providence, to appear to them in so wrong a Light, and hereupon so unjustifiable. Were it possible for a Mortal to discern plainly the whole connected Scheme ; and to examine perfectly every Part belonging to it ; with the Design, and actual Usefulness, of every one in its Place ; (which perhaps transcends the Reach of the *highest* created Minds) he would certainly see Cause, to be wrapped into AMAZE-MENT ! at the *Wisdom*, and *Goodness*, and *complete Rectitude*, discovered in the whole, and in each Part, in Proportion ; instead of finding Room for the lowest Degree of Censure.

That *this Earth* in particular, or any Creature belonging to it, should have been

differently formed from what it now is ; or any Case or Circumstance respecting any Creature, have been otherwise appointed ; in order to discover the divine Perfections to greater Advantage than they are now displayed ; is so wild a Conceit, and so arrogant a Suggestion ; that it seems incredible, a *wise* and *virtuous* Person could ever have been thus infatuated. — Can *infinite* Wisdom be chargeable with Weakness in any of its Attempts ! or *Perfection* be led into wrong Management ! The very *Nature* of Things forbid it ; as well as the Reasons attending them. 'Tis even *impossible* for God to act unlike himself ; or therefore to act *wrongly*, in whatever Case he is concerned.

Let therefore those vitious besotted Mortals, if any such there be, who dare to arraign the Appointments of Providence, take home closely to themselves the contemptuous Shame of their *Ignorance* and *Arrogance* ! — a most shocking Mixture ! which gives a Character the meanest and most extravagant, that can blot a rational Nature. And let all of *Understanding* be led, from what *appears* of the Perfections of God in this little Point of the *Universe*, this *earthly* System ; to give on all Occasions,

mons, the Honour and Praise he so manifestly deserves. — And this Consideration leads me to another instructive Corollary: viz.

SECONDLY, “ That as God appears
 “ from the foregoing Account of his Ap-
 “ pointments in *this* World, to have di-
 “ rected all Things, respecting *all* the
 “ Creatures here; and in particular, with
 “ respect to *Men*, not only in the most
 “ unexceptionable, but in the *kindest* man-
 “ ner that could reasonably have been
 “ desired; most surely then, it must be-
 “ come every one, to guard carefully
 “ against all repining *Thoughts* that may
 “ cast a Reflection on divine Providence;
 “ there not being in Reality, the *least*
 “ Foundation for them.”

Had the Plan of this Earth, before it was actually formed, been presented to the View of the highest created Mind; and a plain Description given of the *Kinds*, and *Natures*, of the numberless Creatures proposed to inhabit it; it would no doubt have been thought *impossible* to treat them all, not only with an amazing Flow of parental Favour in the Distribution of suitable Good; but especially with such
similar

similar indulgent Kindness as appears to be actually shewn them. Even the *least* considerable Creatures that come within our Notice, are found richly provided with all the Goods desirable for them ; and hereupon enjoy their State of Being in a great Variety of delighting suitable Entertainments. Nor doth it appear they are subjected to any other Suffering, than what the respective Natures wherein they are thus delighted, do render unavoidable. Such AMAZING GOODNESS hath been manifested to even the *animal* Creation !

And, whatever Distinction in Favour may be supposed to be made, betwixt the merely animal, and the rational Orders of Creatures, must be concluded to turn to the special Advantage of the latter. Wherefore *Mankind* have Reason to believe, that *they* especially are treated with all the parental Kindness their State of Being, and the State of Things respecting them, would properly admit. Nor can there be *real* Ground to conceive ; that *any* one is neglected by the common Parent, or less favoured than another, if on no Account deserving it. Whatever Difference in Circumstances may therefore appear betwixt Man and Man, must be concluded to result

sult from his own Conduct; or, from the *unavoidable* Event of the most skilful Constitution, designed and accomplished to as great Advantage as could reasonably be desired.

How *absurd*, and *inexcusable*, must it therefore be, to complain of such Appointments? or, in any Degree, to repine at the irremediable Events of so *perfectly* faultless, and *most incomparable* Direction of Things.

And, let it farther be considered; that all the Delights of Life, even every *animal* Gratification, as well as *intellectual* Pleasure, undeniably and manifestly results from this wonderfully contrived Scheme. Had we ourselves been differently formed from what we are; or, had external Things respecting us been differently constituted: which way then, could we propose to have obtained any *one* Sort of Good we are now delighted with? Would we enjoy (*e. g.*) our *animal* Pleasures, without such animal Appetites and Senses as are the Instruments of tasting them? or can we suppose we might be endowed with those Appetites, without an *animal Body* into which they are inserted, and to which they essentially belong? or, that a
Body

Body *thus* formed, might not have been liable to Sickneſs or Pain, or to any affecting Maladies? Should we not, in all Reaſon, take the Body as it is; and be altogether contented with every Circumſtance attending it? And eſpecially, as this animal Part is undeniably inſtrumental to a much greater Degree of Comfort, than it neceſſarily occaſions of Pain? Should not thoſe who are *this* way afflicted, ſuppoſing their Afflictions are manifeſtly *providential*, conſider their Obligations in the *Good* they enjoy thro' the Inſtrumentality of their Bodies; as well as turn their Thoughts on the *Evils* they are hereby ſubject to? And, being greatly favoured on the *whole*, ſhould they not be much more forward to LAUD their Benefactor, than to grow reluctant at the incidental Maladies which their animal State expoſeth them to?

Further : Do they endure the more Pain through the Workings of their *Minds* on the afflictive Caſe they are *this* way brought into? or, is their *Reaſon* inſtrumental any *other* way, in increaſing their Sorrows?—Will this allow Men to murmur or repine, becauſe God hath inveſted them with this eminent Faculty? In *itſelf*, it muſt be acknowledged an *invaluable* Talent: and it
turns

turns upon the whole, to *vast* Advantage to Mankind, when rightly improved. Nor are there *any* of its *natural* Effects, but may be found, on one Account or another, beneficial and useful.—But supposing it be instrumental in some few Instances, to the Enlargement of Sorrow : while 'tis manifestly *far more* serviceable to the Increase of Joy ; it must appear, all Things considered, an *invaluable* Privilege ; and should therefore excite the most exalted Thanksgivings, instead of being the Occasion of the least Reluctancy. Would we enjoy *Good* from the Hand of God, and not submit to the Evils incumbent on the State of Being by which we enjoy it ? How peevish and absurd ? How provoking and inexcusable, is such a froward Conduct ? Had Reason and Gratitude their proper Influence, we should every where meet with the Eclats of *Praise*, instead of the Murmurs of repining Spirits. *Then* would Men *most* regard the *Favours* they have received from the indulgent Parent ; and would fix chiefly their Minds on the *Obligations* laid upon them ; instead of overlooking a vast Variety of Blessings, and of poring upon Evils which ought, it may be, to be wholly chargeable on their own Conduct ; or, if really *providential*, are designed,

and

and tending to promote their *Good*; and greatly outweighed by it.

I observe farther, **THIRDLY**, “ That
 “ our present Felicity doth not so much
 “ depend on the Circumstances allotted
 “ us, of whatever kind they are; as on
 “ our *manner of behaving* amidst those
 “ Circumstances.”

For, as our main Distinction from *animal* Creatures, consists in being endowed with rational Faculties; when *these* are rightly improved, we may draw some Entertainment, or procure some Advantage, even from *every* Thing resulting from our State of Being; since nothing but *Good* was designed by God in the original Plan: I believe I may add, “ and may
 “ derive it as well from one Circumstance,
 “ as from another.” ’Tis true, different Circumstances will occasion and require a different Procedure; but the *Event* of one and the other may be equally beneficial; and, in consequence of this, be equally entertaining. *Rational* Creatures must derive chiefly their Felicity from such Sort of Entertainments as correspond with their *rational* Being; and therefore will result from a proper Exercise of their *intellectual* Capacities.

Capacities. Wherefore, as *Reason* is the distinguishing Part of our human Species, even our *animal* Gratifications no other way delight us as *Men*, than as they join as it were in Concert with the nobler Tastes of our prime Faculties, I mean, our *rational*. For when our Reason cannot approve, but is constrained to condemn, the irregular Indulgences our bodily Appetites may prompt us to give way to ; there then ariseth, betwixt our rational and animal Parts, such unhappy Discord, as not only prevents the true Enjoyment of our State, but renders us extremely miserable : and, when the latter prevails in any such Contests, we sink, at such Times, among the animal Creation ; and take up with a gross Felicity even short of *Theirs*. To have therefore a proper Fruition of our present Being, we must necessarily chuse such Delights and Entertainments as are one way or another, either the Product of Reason, or countenanced by it. Wherefore, our *animal* Gratifications, when enjoyed to any Advantage, or when promoting at all our proper Felicity, must depend on the Choice and Government of our *rational* Powers, or they will not administer the very lowest Degree of *suitable* Entertainment. And, if our *animal* Fruitions do thus depend on
the

the Exercise of Reason ; all our other Entertainments more evidently do so.

From these Considerations we may conclude ; that the different Circumstances wherein any Persons are *providentially* placed, are of very little Moment in respect to their true Felicity ; since this ariseth from the regular Exercise of our *rational* Powers ; *these* being designed as the principal Ground of all our *proper* Delights * ; and the better we improve those *special* Means of our Felicity, the more we shall obtain of it. *Afflictive* Circumstances may conduce hereunto even better than prosperous. For when Reason is rightly exercised in a trying Case, it directs to, and cultivates, some of the noblest Virtues of which we are capable ; and thereupon, consequentially promotes our truest *present* Happiness. Many in the Heathen, as well as Christian World, have, by this means attained such a Degree of Fortitude, as hath rendered them superior to all the Events of Life. *Others* have been brought to an habitual Exercise of Humility and Meekness, Commiseration and Benevolence ; and to so true a Knowledge of themselves,

* See the Note, p. 212.

and

and of all affecting Objects, as hath not only prevented the Extravagancies and Follies Mankind so generally run into; but enabled them to walk in the Path of Life, with such Honour and Entertainment as became their State of Being. Indeed, *every* Condition of Life, and *every* attending Circumstance, may be thus improved, if Men could be prevailed on, to direct always their Steps as warily and wisely, as their rational Powers would enable them. A contented and well-regulated Mind, may get room for the worthiest Enjoyment, amidst the most afflicting Circumstances ordinarily met with : but a turbulent restless Spirit, will find something or other, in *every* Condition, to render itself miserable.

I am willing to improve farther this useful Consideration : and therefore remark, FOURTHLY, “ That the right Enjoyment
“ of Life, so far as it depends on the *external* Goods provided for us, must be
“ concluded to result, only from a *regular*
“ or *rational* Fruition of them.”

Every *Kind* and every *Degree* of *human* Entertainment, is undoubtedly derived from an harmonious Agreement betwixt the Objects of our Delight, and the Faculties

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affected with them. Otherwise, the Creator's Measures and Intentions would be strangely disconcerted; and Man might strike out for himself an Happiness not designed for him; or, might find and fetch desirable Good from Objects not prepared for it, and with Powers not conferred on him; which is as great an Absurdity as we can well conceive of.

Now, as Virtue, or *laudable* Conduct, manifestly does consist, in acting according to Nature and Reason; that is, according to our own Nature, and the Nature and Relations of Things respecting us: hence it follows; that those only who behave in this manner, can *rightly enjoy themselves*; or really obtain the Good that corresponds with their State of Being. The very *Nature* of Things forbids it in a *contrary* Conduct. For Things that are *dissimilar* cannot possibly well accord. No Connexion can be formed betwixt them; nor any Harmony be produced by attempting it. No Sort of Good can therefore be extracted, by setting together an Object and a Faculty that have no Agreement. A *Beast* may be as well entertained with the proper Delights of a human Mind; as *Men* may obtain any Kind or Degree, of proper En-

Enjoyment that is inconsistent with their Reason. *Beasts* have no Capacity of tasting *rational* Good. *This* Sort of Entertainment, and *their* animal Powers, are altogether incongruous: they cannot therefore be instrumental in producing Pleasure.—Nor is there any better Agreement between the *irregular* Indulgencies of an animal Appetite, and the natural Appetite itself; which was not prepared for such Indulgence. *Extremes* in every Thing, exceed the Limits of Nature:—and cannot therefore be productive of real Good. When any Excesses are run into, *such* Person passeth the Bounds wherein the Goods prepared for him are enclosed; and hereupon misseth the very Thing he aimed at.—Could the sottish Sensualist be persuaded of this; it would effectually stop him in his wild Career; and, would prevail on him, from even his *animal* Views, to keep carefully within the Bounds of Temperance in all his sensitive Gratifications, in order to make the best of them; since this is the only Course to obtain that *low* Felicity wherein he sottishly centers. When the Calls of Nature are satisfied; that is, when the Appetites have fully obtained their natural Craving; (I speak not of Appetites distorted and vitiated: for *these* are no longer *natural* Appetites: nor can *those*

be instrumental in procuring *real* Good : but, when our *natural* Appetites I say, have obtained what they crave ;) farther Crammings and Swillings are only a Force on Nature ; and hereupon tend to *nauseate* the Palate, instead of delighting it. The proper Gratification ceaseth ; and every repeated Gust, doth but set the *senseless Epicure* at a greater Distance still from the Good he aims at.

Further : — As there is no *Good* to be obtained beyond the Limits which the Author of Nature hath fixed for the right Enjoyment of our Being ; — so, there is nothing but positive *Evil*, of one kind or another, to be afterward met with : whereupon the ranging Trespasser becomes a miserable Loser, instead of being a Gainer, by passing the Bounds prescribed him. His Debauches and Riots most wretchedly prey upon his darling Part ; I mean, upon his *Body* ; as well as provoke his *rational* ; and gradually destroy those Appetites and Tastes which animal Fruitions were designed to gratify. So that, in the Issue, he not only finds himself sottishly fooled of the Happiness he centered in ; but sunk into hopeless Circumstances that bar any farther Prospect of it : yea, to be environed with Troops of torturing Maladies which sport
in

in his future Misery.—“ *This is the dire*
 “ *Event of forsaking the Paths of Virtue!*”

So skilfully and kindly hath the *Grand Contriver* ordered Matters; that, the right Enjoyment of our Being, depends (as was shewn above) on the *regular* Exercise of the various Powers inserted into it. And this seems to have been done, to induce us the more effectually, to act worthy those rational Natures wherewith we are endowed; in order to be disposed for that *higher* State of Happiness he is willing to advance us, in our future *compleated* Being.

But, as those who are besotted in animal Indulgences, are *compelled* to gull their Consciences with Fairy Conceits, of one kind or another, to prevent their Clamours; and, are particularly fond of stretching divine *Goodness* into a Ground of some Support; and may perhaps lay hold on the Account before given of it, to encourage this Presumption; I apprehend it adviseable to observe, — FIFTHLY,
 “ That the *Goodness* of God, how ex-
 “ tensive soever it may be thought, cannot
 “ be supposed to countenance the least
 “ Deviation, in *any* Instance, from the
 “ Laws

“ Laws of Nature ; or therefore to excuse
 “ us in any Act, or any Gratification,
 “ which *Reason* will not justify.”

It hath indeed been pleaded before ;
 that the consummate Wisdom, and consequent Goodness of the Supreme Being, may lead us to conclude ; there was nothing but *Good* originally proposed in *all* the Works of Creation, and in *all* the Directions of Providence, in particular with respect to *Mankind* : and therefore ; that every Thing *really* good for us must be supposed to be allowed of. But this very Consideration will lead us to this consequent Conclusion : That nothing which is manifestly inconsistent with our State of Being ; or yet, with the Felicity of *any* of our *fellow-Creatures*, can, in the *least*, be allowed by the God of *Goodness*, tho’ considered only as *such* : — therefore, no *Excess* in animal Gratifications ; nor *any* vitious Indulgences ; or any criminal Acts ; because such wrong Conduct doth unavoidably issue, either in our *own* Detriment, or our Neighbours ; — generally speaking, hath unhappy Effects on both.

Thus do Men suffer, in the *natural*
 Course of Things, by their ill Conduct,
 by

by transgressing the Law of their Nature ; and acting inconsistently with the Reason they are endowed with. We must therefore have been differently formed ; and the Nature of Things respecting us, have been differently constituted ; or the ill Effects we now feel on behaving vitiously, must *necessarily* follow such irregular Deportment.—Such is the Constitution of our *Bodies*, that they suffer always by *unnatural* Indulgences ; and by *immoderate* Draughts of *allowed* Pleasure ; as they are not prepared for such *forced* Sensualities ; nor have Strength to combat with such fatal Foes. *All* is irregular :—contrary to the State of Things :—and must therefore prove pernicious. So that the sottish Epicure knows not what he would be at, when desiring to be indulged in any kind of Pleasure his Reason cannot approve of. Every such Gratification contradicts his *whole Being*. 'Tis inconsistent with the Constitution of even his *animal* Part ; as well as offensive to his rational. Were he therefore *allowed* to pursue such foreign Delights, he would necessarily find himself disappointed, as his Nature is not adapted to them. And, in such Pursuits, would also leave behind him those that are prepared for his State of Being : so that on

both Accounts, he would become a *miserable Loser.

Wherefore, even the *Goodness* of God may lead us to conclude; that he certainly forbids us every thing which our own unbiaſſed Reason is obliged to condemn:—therefore, every Gratification, and every sensual Indulgence, that is really irregular, or not conſiſtent with our State of Being is forbidden.

The like muſt be concluded reſpecting *ſocial* Conduct, as appears ſo very manifeſt with regard to *perſonal*. Whatever Actions are injurious to any of our fellow Creatures, are undeniably *criminal*; that is, do evidently contradict the Nature and Reason of Things; and herein the Will of our common Parent.—Every one has a Claim, not only to the Gifts of Nature, but to every other Good he is rightfully poſſeſſed of. This muſt be as readily acknowledged in reſpect to our *Neighbour's* Rights, as with regard to our *own*. Now Reason cannot allow an Alienation of thoſe Rights, unleſs ſome way forfeited; therefore muſt condemn a cauſeleſs invading another's Properties; and *every other* injurious Act by which he becomes a Sufferer. The common Parent muſt be
sup-

supposed to join with the Dictates of *un-biassed* Reason in *all* Causes : for the Voice of Reason, when rightly informed, is the Voice of God. So that, both God and Reason do manifestly forbid *every* Thing injurious, in whatever manner practised : and evidently forbid it, on *personal* Accounts, as well as *social*. For, were any kind of Violences, Oppressions, or Frauds, or any *unsociable* Demeanour between Man and Man, allowed of but in *one* Instance ; the like Allowance might, with as much Reason, be expected in another : And in the Progress of such Liberty, the Rights of *all* Men must lie exposed, as well as the Rights of one ;—by which means every individual Person might become a Sufferer. Wherefore, both God and Reason are even *obliged*, as I may speak, to forbid every injurious Act, respecting either the Body, or Goods, or *Reputation* of any one ; —were it for no other Cause, but to secure the Rights of the *injurious Criminal himself* ; and more especially for the sake of the undeserving Sufferer, who is in such Case, a far more worthy Object of Esteem and Favour than *he* can have any pretence to,

Upon the whole : As the *Goodness* of God will be acknowledged to be regulated

lated by unerring Wisdom, there can be no Ground to imagine it wrongly extended, in any *one* Instance, to the Detriment of any one: and consequently cannot allow of any Indulgence, or any Act, inconsistent with Mens Welfare; or therefore inconsistent with our State of Being, or any Power belonging to us.—I observe farther,

SIXTHLY, “ That the Account which
 “ hath been given of God’s impartial Fa-
 “ vour to Mankind, while here in *this*
 “ Life, represents the divine *Goodness* in so
 “ perfectly unexceptionable, and *most en-*
 “ *gaging* View, as must excite in those
 “ persuaded of it, the *highest Adoration*,
 “ and *most enlarged Praise*, whenever seri-
 “ ously contemplated.”

It must surely operate in some such manner, on every *judicious* Mind, when considering the Deity in this *greatly amaz-*
ing! and *most endearing Light*. The
astomishing Skill, and *Indulgence* also mani-
 fested in the present State of Things, as
thus considered, are sufficient to fill a well-
 disposed Mind with *extatic Rapture!* How
 stupendous was the Contrivance! and how
 endearing the Aim, of the *incomparable*
Artist! in forming such a Species of
 Crea-

Creatures as *Mankind* are;—infinitely diversified, by widely different Circumstances, as the common Good required: — And yet to accomplish the intricate Scheme in so *inimitable* a manner, that *every Individual* hath Reason to account himself as kindly regarded, and as well provided for, in *Proportion to his Meetness*, as any of his fellow-Mortals ! yea, “to be *best* directed, and *best* stationed, “ for his *own* particular Benefit ; as well “ as to best Advantage with respect to the “ *common Welfare*.”

This appears to be the Case, on the whole, even of *this* Life, in the View of another, if what hath been argued hath any real Foundation. When therefore any Instances occur which may be thought an Exception ; the real State of such Persons is either quite mistaken ; or must otherwise be imputed to their own Faultiness, or Folly : or, should it *unavoidably* be the Effect of the present Constitution of Things, we may, I think, be assured, 'tis some way or other compensated. It cannot reasonably be concluded, to have *originally* been designed them, unless on some Account deserving it : nor can it be ascribed to any causeless Partiality in a *providential* Direction

tion of Things. Did every one carefully direct his Steps by the Dictates of his Reason; and improve to as good Advantage as he might, the Circumstances of his Case; he would obtain one way or another, as *true* an Enjoyment of his State, and also as advantageous, in View of another Life, (which ought always to be attended to) as *any* other Person, in whatever Circumstances found.

The most trying Case that is *really* providential, might be thus improved; and perhaps, as soon and easily, as the most delightful. *Joyous external* Circumstances, (by which I understand, *bodily*, as well as others) can turn to no one's Felicity, unless they are rationally improved. And when those that are *adverse*, are thus steadily improved; they may turn as beneficially, (as hath been proved before) and hereupon be the Ground of as true Enjoyment of Life, as is usually obtained the *other* way.

So wonderfully hath God contrived the Natures and Powers of Men, and the external Things respecting them! — What egregious Folly doth it therefore betray,
to

to grow vain, on the one Hand, on external Advantages? or, on the other, to indulge a repining Spirit in whatever afflictive Case?—No one can be *really* advanced above another, either in Honour or Happiness, but by excelling him in *Virtue*: that is, in a wiser and better Conduct. He may *seem* indeed to be his Superior, by being privileged beyond him in the Gifts of Nature, or in those of Fortune: but on *neither* of these hath he Ground to value himself, any farther than they are improved to some serviceable Account. Indeed, Ignorance and Conceit, impress often a *fanciful* Worth on those foreign Commodities: but solid Wisdom makes little Account of them. I call them *foreign*, with respect to the Possessor: for they are not the *Essentials* of his rational Being; but only *Circumstantials* which incidentally adhere to it. Persons of Understanding know perfectly well, that Privileges of *those* kinds receive their *whole* Value from the valuable Ends they are made to serve. And, when they are *not* improved to beneficial Purposes, they are but *Incumbrances*;—an *Obstruction* to Felicity; instead of promoting it. And very often become the Bane of it.

How

How little Reason then have those who are distinguished only in *Externals*, to despise, or disregard, their *imagined* Inferiors; because not accoutred, in like manner as themselves, with these foreign Trap-pings? The meanest and most unsightly Mortal is certainly a *fellow-Creature* with the highest Monarch on Earth: and perhaps may much *excel* him. He is evidently his Superior by *Nature*, if of more Understanding: and *more eminently* his Superior, if he acts a more honourable Part, and lives to better Purpose.—In *such* Case, he deserves his *Veneration*, instead of his Contempt: for he is raised above him in the principal Eminences which belong to Men.—But a good Understanding will direct every one to demean himself always with true Humanity to *all* his fellow-Mortals, how much soever inferior to him in any Circumstance of Life. Whereupon it may be observed; “That the greatest Minds are most con-
 “descending; most sociable; and most
 “beneficent.” ’Tis the *Delight* of such, to shew Compassion and Favour to all who need it. Disdain and Insults are the Produce only of *little* Minds: and so are *all* the Vices which contradict Humanity. Indeed, *every* Thing unsociable betrays a
 Defect,

Defect, either in the *Understanding* of the Person chargeable with it, or otherwise in the *Exercise* of the Faculties conferred upon him.

These Considerations, which are very obvious, should shame Superiors of whatever Station, out of all Indignities to even the *meanest* of their Dependents :—should suppress the Fumes of over-bearing Haughtiness :—restrain the Exasperations of Pride and Vain-glory :—and should teach them such *Friendliness* to every fellow-Creature, as may become the respective Members of the same original Family.

I would now draw towards a Close of this Disquisition ; and particularly aim in it at being farther serviceable to the *animal* Part of our Species, whose extremely unhappy Case I do sincerely lament : and therefore am desirous of giving them the best Assistance I can, to recover the Dignity of their Nature, and to obtain the Felicity of *Men*. It may easily be perceived, I intend those who have cast off the right Exercise of their *rational* Faculties ; and, who sink in their *Conduct*, below the Brute Creation. Of *this* Number, are, not only the *goatish Debauchees*,
and

and *swinish Bacchanals* ; but all the *rapacious*, and *injurious* Tribes, who knowingly break in, by *whatever* Methods, on their Neighbours Properties. The *first* mentioned *Herd*s are *notoriously* chargeable : and the others, of every sort, deserve also in their Measure, to be thus stigmatized. For *Reason* is so far from countenancing the least Injustice, or yet *Unkindness*, to any fellow-Creature, that it utterly *condemns* them. An *unkind* Act is a Reproach to the Faculty ; and much more therefore, an *injurious* one. *Understanding* leads in all Cases to a *laudable* Conduct : and therefore cultivates Dispositions and Principles of a *social* Nature ; and prompts to, and encourageth the kindest Discoveries of them. The Communication of Good, is its *prime Object* ; because best promoting its proper Entertainment. To *this* therefore it most naturally tends : and *herein* finds its greatest Satisfaction. From whence may be inferred ; that those who break in on other Peoples Properties ; or *any* way act an injurious Part ; and especially those who are *notedly* chargeable, do herein demean themselves as if void of Understanding. They can certainly have no right Notion of the real Nature of Things. They appear even ignorant of the Nature
and

and Tendency of their own Faculties ; as well as the Nature of their own Conduct ; and deserve therefore to be accounted *Ideots in Practice*, with whatever Capacities they may naturally be endowed.

But some perhaps of those infamous Criminals may smile at the Imputation ; being blown up with a Conceit, that their known Abilities, and even their artful Conduct in compassing their Aims, are the plainest Confutation of it—But these ought to consider ; that the *Abuse* of any Talents, shews a greater Defect, than the natural want of them. So far as they are perverted, they are despoiled of their Properties. They cease to be, what a regular Exercise would have actually rendered them, and what Nature intended : Whereupon they lose their intrinsic Value ; and degenerate into Dross. *Craft*, can be no Evidence of a clear Understanding. It rather discovers a Mind that is overcast with a delusive Cloud, so as to prevent the visual Faculty from discerning rightly the Objects that are before it.

On what Foundation then, can the *artful Debauchee* ; the *expert Cheat* ; or the *cunning Underminer of another's Interests* ;

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raise

raise up his Imagination of the Acuteness of his Parts? The greatest Skill those several Criminals discover, is, in a *dextrous deluding their own Understandings*; in imposing upon *themselves*, by false Representations, and deceiving Views; whereby, for a little while, perhaps, they may proceed in their Enormities without Remorse, and sottiſhly take Delight in the most abhorrent Courses. But, as these gross Impostures are rarely carried on through the *whole* of Life, they open at last, as soon as they recover the right use of their Faculties, to their *perfect Confusion*! and work Abhorrence of themselves!—*Oh dire Consideration! Oh frightful amazing Thought!*

And, let them farther remember: that those who are grown expert, either in Knavery, or Vice; — in relative Wrongs, or personal Debauchery, deserve to be accounted as a Sort of *Monsters* among our Species. They are indeed endowed with *rational* Powers, but discover such Dispositions, and engage in such Pursuits, as are a *perfect Contradiction* to them. Yea, they differ *most unaccountably*, from every other kind of Creatures. They not only prey upon their own Species; but many times, even *triumph* in making Sacrifices of *themselves*!

selves ! Every Order besides, employ their Powers to the obtaining of *Good* ; but *these* pervert even their *principal* Capacity, to work *Evil* to *themselves*, as well as to their *Brethren* ; and hereby run counter to the Design of Nature, and to all its regular Operations. And the more Artifice and Dexterity they *this* way discover, the more enormous is their Procedure, and the *stranger* Creatures they appear ! But how lamentable is this ! that, when God hath qualified those deluded Mortals for the noblest Enjoyments ; they should so sottishly sink into the Course of Life, wherein they fall short even of *brutal* Gratification ! yea, wherein they are constrained to get out of their proper Rank, to *have any Enjoyment at all* ! Even that poor Share of *unnatural animal* Delight wherewith they content themselves, is not to be obtained, till they have smothered, or distorted, their rational Faculties, and hereby deprived themselves of the greatest Gift bestowed on them,——How lamentable is this Case ! that Creatures thus endowed, should have no better Notion of their Privilege ; and even cast such wild Contempt upon it !

Could the injurious Violators of the Laws of Property ; or those who indulge

in Debauchery, or Riot; be persuaded to retire, for a Moment or two, within their own Breasts; and calmly compare the Dignity of their Nature, with their manner of Conduct; they would not only be miserably *ashamed*, but perfectly *confounded*, at their despicable Course of Life.—Is it possible for *Reason* to have its proper Influence, while a fellow-Creature is wronged, or abused, or, but *scornfully* treated, by a *Member of the Family*?—Can *Violences*, or *Oppressions*, or *Frauds*, or *Insults*, be consistent with the right Exercise of a *human* Understanding? Can *Reason* allow itself in breaking in upon *Right*? or, in cancelling, without Cause, the natural Claims of any one to *any* Sort of Good? Will it ever willingly infringe the Laws of Nature, of which itself is the Compiler, and Guardian*?—Can it possibly annul its own most excellent Precepts? or countenance *any* Act that violates the Design of them?

How would every injurious Criminal, in whatever Instance found so, be *perfectly*, I say, *confounded* at his sottish Conduct, did

* I here consider human *unclouded* Reason, as a Ray of the Divine: and, in *this* View, as connected with it.

he soberly reflect on the Design and Tendency of his rational Nature, and, on the right Enjoyment of Life ; and then set in the View of these, his *Rapines* and *Wrongs*, his *Violences*, and *Insults*, causelessly committed against unoffending fellow-Creatures? How plainly would he *then* appear, in even his own Eyes, as a *Monster* among our Species ; as having Dispositions diametrically opposite to what are properly humane ; and living in Practices most highly reproachful to his rational Being. *What Pity 'tis*, that these *sottish* Offenders should not, for their *own* Sake, have a truer Notion of those *manifest* Things? For how is it *possible*, they should, *any* way, obtain the right Enjoyment of Life? or yet entirely escape that *keenest* Part of Misery, the *Remorse* and *Agony* of a *self-condemning* Mind? — To conceal from a busily-prying Conscience, their *brutish* Debaucheries, their Oppressions and Robberies, their Extortions and Knaveries, their Slanders and Back-bitings ; or any other injurious Practices, is in Nature impossible. Wherefore, they are often compelled to stand forth and witness against their several Crimes ; and then, to act at once the Part of a severe inflexible Judge, and of merciless Executioners, in pronouncing

nouncing and inflicting deserved Punishment. And the only Refuge they have then left, is, *to fly from themselves*; and to seek a little Shelter amidst the Clamour and Bustle of a giddy noisy World; or otherwise perhaps, in a *gloomy* Imagination of an approaching *Non-Existence*.— This *last* mentioned Refuge indeed, is what a Person of *Understanding* cannot *possibly* I think obtain. 'Tis so *shocking* to Reason, as well as contradictory to every rational Sentiment, that such a one in particular, must start back at the dire Conclusion, whenever he turns a Thought upon it! and must dread this *horrible* Remedy, even more than the sad Disease to which he would fain apply it!—How must the conscious Soul most dreadfully quiver thro' every Part, if, apprehending itself standing on the Brink of *Annihilation*! and just about to drop into it!—The Case seems to be attended with such *terrible Affrightment*, that the racking Endurance of *endless piercing Torture* can scarce compare with it.

The dissolute Debauchee may scoff at, and deride, these puny Apprehensions; as, in a Day of Health he may sottishly term them; but, when the *poor Animal* is never
so

so little seized with a threatening Disease ; and especially when he is brought in the full View of a Dissolution :——How *daftardly and abject* ! how *disdainfully puny* ! is his whole Deportment ?——How little then of an *Hector*, or *Thraso*, doth this doughty Champion shew himself ?——Then feminine Tears are wont to flow plentifully ! or, should these be refrained, thro' strong Shame, or Confusion ; yet, to all about him, a *perfectly dejected Cowardice*, and a *totally terrified Spirit*, in the most affecting View appear, if not deprived of his Reason.

To prevent this ignoble *daftardly* End ; and to obtain while in Life, the proper Delights of Men ; let all who are endowed with any Degree of Sense, be prevailed on to evidence it, by allowing their *Understanding*, and not their *animal Appetites*, to direct and govern their Conduct.

T H E E N D.



THE END